



Yusuf da Costa is a retired Head of Department of Didactics at the University of the Western Cape. At the time of his retirement, he was an associate professor in the department as part of the faculty of education. He has written on a variety of subjects especially on the history and sociology of the Muslim community at the Cape. At present, he is the Southern Africa Khalifah of Maulana Shaykh Nazim Haqqani of Cyprus, the head of the worldwide Naqshbandi order. He is engaged primarily today in writing on different aspects of Islam, in lecturing and performing his duties as Khalifah. The present volume is a selection of some of his talks that he had delivered in mosques and to private gatherings.



Bay'ah:

The pledge to Allah Almighty

by

Yusuf da Costa



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Tel: +27 (21) 5933348

Fax: +27 (21) 5933348

Email: (secretary@naqshbandi.org.za)

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أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَ الصَّلَاةُ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَ عَلَى آلِهِ وَ أَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ

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Foreword

During this month of *Ramadan* (2007), I delivered a large number of small talks after *Tarawih Salah* at the Goodwood Masjid, Cape Town, on the subject of *zakah*. During these talks, I once more realized the extent to which important aspects of Islam at the Cape, and elsewhere, have been ignored, silenced or covered up. Whatever the historical or religious reasons might be for this, the fact remains that there have not been sufficient attempts, as far as I know, to present as much of the full package of all the Divine teachings on Islam to the Muslim public. Perhaps this might be one of the reasons for the accelerated religious decline of the Muslim community at the present time.

On previous occasions I had referred to this covering up as the quiet "erasure" of sections of the Qur'an and large numbers of *Ahadith*, especially those *Ahadith* classified as being "Holy" or "Divine". What all this means is that the original Divine package delivered to us by His Messenger (s.a.w.s.) has become smaller and smaller. Consequently, the Muslim community has been considerably short-changed by those who claim to be in charge of our religious teachings and affairs.

In all my years that I have sat in lectures in mosques, I have not on a single instance heard about the teachings on alimony by the *Shafi'iyah* School of Thought to which most of us adhere. The silence on these teachings has resulted in the massive abuse and impoverishment of women who have been, in many instances, "dumped" by their husbands through the misuse of the rules of divorce by these men. The suffering of the children and the several negative social consequences in many of these cases need not even be mentioned. Because of the criminal hesitancy on Islamic Personal Law, large numbers of women are left destitute after years of marriage and the running of families, with their dignity as

women in tatters and without any source of income. I have personally come across so many of such women who have had to slave until the early hours of the morning in order to keep families going. This scandalous "dumping" of families by "fathers" is encouraged by the fact that women have no or very little recourse to Islamic Law (and do not know of any recourse to South African Law) because those claiming to be in charge of our religious affairs have been unable to come to proper conclusions on the application of Islamic Personal Law in this country. One wonders where the greater criminality lies: with the "guardians" of our religious affairs or with those who, without hesitation, take advantage of "religious interpretations" that favour men. And of course, suffering under the load of all of these are the women in our community who are already over-burdened by the many tasks that they have to perform as mothers, grandmothers and wives. My word, what a disgrace! The feminine gender favoured by Allah Almighty as the recipients of souls, and within whom the creative process takes place, is treated by a male-dominated community and society as if that gender has no human and religious dignity and value. The application of the *Shafi'iyah* rules on alimony would at least have eased the burdens carried by women, and the firm application of only *Shari'ah*-based divorces would lessen the burden considerably more.

Neither have I heard about the importance of *malul bir* to solve problems of poverty and social dislocation amongst Muslims, whose needs *zakah* could not cover or is not made to cover. The distribution of *zakah* has to be done in such a way as to 'satisfy want'. What this means, is that the *zakah* has to be used to solve problems of poverty and social dislocation amongst Muslims in order to free them from such poverty or other needs. If *zakah* is unable to do this then one has to resort to *malul bir*, which is the spending of one's wealth on others in need because of one's love

for Allah Almighty and because one wants to be for Him. The enormous spiritual benefits that lie in spending one's *riziq* in the Cause of Allah and for His sake, grow out of a special grant of righteousness and love for Him that Allah has given some. This righteousness is accompanied by a religious consciousness that encourages one to act for His sake, and to portray maximum generosity. All of this lies in the verse:

وَأَتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ

And to spend of your wealth out of love for Him (ii: 177).

The fact that this refers to an obligatory *sadaqah* (according to Qurtubi, for example) has been quietly ignored. Even *zakah* itself is being seriously neglected, despite the exceptional work done by organizations such as SANZAF and others, and these organizations are unable to do what is religiously incumbent because of the negligence by Muslims of this obligation. This negligence is encouraged by watered down teachings on *zakah* and the silence on *malul bir*. According to Daraqutni, in a report from Fatimah bint Qays, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) said: "There is a due on property other than *zakah*", and then he quoted the verse from the Qur'an:

لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَ الْكِتَابِ وَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَ الْيَتَامَى وَ الْمَسْكِينِ وَ ابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَ السَّائِلِينَ وَ فِي الرِّقَابِ وَ أَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَ ءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَ الْمُؤْفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَ الصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَ الضَّرَّاءِ وَ حِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقِينَ

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the east or the west, but it is righteousness to believe in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, and the Messengers; and spend of your substance out of love for Him, for your kin, for the orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; and to be steadfast in prayer, to give zakah, to fulfill the contracts you had made, to be firm and patient in pain and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are those who fear Allah (ii: 177).

Of course, the social damage caused by the silence on these verses is immeasurable. Large numbers of Muslims, and I am talking about in South Africa only, are languishing in dire poverty with uncontrollable social and other problems because others in the community have taken hold of most of the community's wealth. The situation is made bleaker by a variety of social and economic factors, out of Muslim control, that encourage social dislocation. Yet we all remain silent while the seams of the community are coming apart. Righteousness has become extremely scarce in a community that is slowly losing its religious way and will, and when righteousness disappears, the need to submit to the Divine Law disappears with it. Thus the teachings on *malul bir* have almost all but died out and the Divine package has become even smaller.

Perhaps one of the most glaring, and I think deliberate, omissions in the local religious discourse are the Qur'anic verses, large number of Prophetic Traditions and detailed historical accounts on *bay'ah* - the pledging of oneself to Allah Almighty, on the hand of an intensely pious person, as a major declaration of religious commitment. If the pledge is not applicable anymore then, at least, there must be the religious honesty to say so, and to say that these

verses are only of historical importance and not applicable at all time and under all circumstances, as the other Divine Words are. But this is not said either, and so ... the silence ... the covering up. Of course, nobody would dare say that because it might throw a major question mark over their Islam. And the silence? Does that not throw such a question mark? Or perhaps the view is that the practice of pledge by the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) was not an essential part of his *uswatun hasanah* (best model) approach and should not have been imitated by those who came after him? But they do not say this either!

On another matter: the mainstream of spirituality that was launched at the beginning of Islam by the Messenger (s.a.w.s.), under the direction of Allah Almighty, had started to dry up, or perhaps diverted into small rivulets, as a consequence of deep reactionary forces that had found their way into Muslim society a short period after his (s.a.w.s.) demise. The more pious elements in this society then started to re-dig the mainstream in order to get it flowing fast again. This was a gigantic historical task by a few people determined to re-introduce into Islam those teachings that centered on spiritual attainments as part of the preparation for the Hereafter. This re-digging of the mainstream has come down in Muslim history under such terms as "*tasawwuf*", "*tariqah*", and "Islamic spirituality", amongst other words. Some of the greatest luminaries in the Islamic world at the time, and up to today, have associated themselves with this re-digging. These people have been to a large degree responsible for the diffusion of Islam to large parts of the world. They are still busy today teaching Mainstream Islam. Here, in South Africa, we know of Sufi Saheb, Badsha Peer, Mawlana Abdul Latif, Shaykh Yusuf, Tuans Abdurahman and Mahmoud, Imam Abdullah (Tuan Guru), and so many others, during our early centuries here. Today few are interested in the contributions made to the establishment and survival of Islam during the early period

of the coming of our forefathers to this country, and very few mosques ever mention them. This silence encourages ignorance, and the ignorance breeds more silence. Of the latest contributors to this stream are individuals such as the imams of the Habibiyyah Masjid in Athlone and the three generations of shaykhs at the Zawiyah Masjid in Cape Town. Even our history is being silenced to serve those who are later going to be classified as "enemies" of Islam by future generations when the rejuvenation of religious thought and practice takes place, and the period of religious sterility comes to an end. The drying up of this stream, a matter encouraged by sections of Muslim "clergy" generally badly schooled in serious scholarship and research, is already having disastrous impacts on the religious intellectual life of a community in social and religious decline. This stream has been the main source for the watering of the religious perspective of small groups of people who have set their sights intelligently on spiritual achievement. If the stream goes that perspective goes, and the vibrancy of Islam as a form of religious liberation will disappear, and we would be left with persons in positions of leadership who have no understanding of what an intense spiritual life is all about, and, in fact, little understanding of Islam.

The impact of all of these silences can also be seen in the creeping neglect or total discarding of various aspects of the Prophetic Practice. This is always a good measuring rod of the extent of the religious decline of a community. There is still a little indecision in discarding the various religious obligations in the Prophetic Practice, but when it comes to matters that are not obligatory, there is no such hesitancy. Thus, we see the decreasing observance of the *Tarawih* Prayers and *Laylatul-Qadr* during *Ramadan*.¹ If one con-

1. In one of the prominent mosques in Cape Town only one to two rows of people attended at night during *Ramadan*. In the Goodwood Mosque that I attend, the attendance dropped to half from the first night to the second, and there was little difference in attendance on *Laylatul Qadr*. From discussions with others, it appears this has become common throughout the Greater Metropolitan Area in Cape Town.

siders that there are large numbers of young people who are not fasting, then it is clear that only a small section of the community is really serious about Islam. For the rest there is just a major pretence about observing the teachings of the religion.

Some other observances that have disappeared or are disappearing are the *du'as* and *adhkar* after the *fard salahs*,² the recitals and *du'a* of *nisfu Sha'ban*,³ the congregational *adhkar* of the different *tariqah* orders such as the *ratibs* of the *Ba Alawiyyah Tariqah*, the front *sunnah* of *Maghrib*,⁴ the *idtija*⁵ prior to the *fard salah* of *Subh*, and the praying of eight cycles of *salah* for the *Tarawih Salah* instead of twenty.⁶

The silences mentioned, the many others not mentioned and the disappearance of aspects of the Prophetic Practice, have all brought about a major reduction in the original package of Islam revealed to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) - while Muslim religious leadership throughout the world, not only here in South Africa, discard various aspects of Islam for different kinds of rewards and forms of recognition. We all pray that somewhere along the line, Divine intervention will bring all of us out of this morass, and that we shall be able to walk tall again as Muslims, putting Allah Almighty first in our lives, Amin.⁷

And Allah knows best.

Yusuf da Costa - September 2008

2. I have found this still being practised in the mosque in Woodstock on Fridays where Imam Yasien Harris officiates, and the mosque in Victoria Road, Grassy Park.

3. The practices of *nisfu Sha'ban* and many of the community's other practices have largely disappeared because of attacks against them by Cape Wahhabi-trained religious leaders.

4. An attempt by me to introduce this *sunnah* (although not a stressed *sunnah*) at the mosque in Kensington failed when the resident *imam* later stopped the practice. Very few mosques give people the chance to practice this. At one mosque the *imam* refused a request by me for a few minutes to pray this.

5. I have never seen or heard of this practice at the Cape.

6. If I remember correctly, this praying of only eight cycles was started at the mosque in Claremont Main Road.

7. It has become common at the Cape to say *insha Allah* after *du'as* in English. This has been encouraged by the two radio stations. I wrote to the stations about this matter, quoting the reference, but it was of no avail. Ignorance, as usual, has gained the upper hand.

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To all those people who allowed me to interview them, and to quote them, I say thank you very much for allowing me to intrude into your private space and time.

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Abbreviations

a.s.: *alayhis salam* (Upon him/her be peace), which is usually recited after the holy names of the Prophets, other than Nabi Muhammad (s.a.w.s.), the family members of Nabi Muhammad (s.a.w.s.), intensely pious women in Islam, and the angels.

r.a.: *radiyallahu anhu, anha* or *anhum* (May Allah be satisfied with him, her or them), which is usually recited after the holy names of the Companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

r.a.: *rahmatullah alayhi, alayha* or *alayhim* (May Allah have mercy on him, her or them), which is usually recited after the holy names of intensely pious persons.

s.a.w.s: *sallal lahu alayhi wa sallam* (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This is usually recited after the holy name of the Nabi Muhammad (s.a.w.s.).

Glossary

adhkar (sing. *dhikr*): celebrating the praises of Allah

Ahli Sunni Wal Jama'ah: the people of the Prophetic Practice and the community, those who refrain from deviation from the Islamic beliefs and practices of Mainstream Islam, the followers of which are called *Sunnis*

ahlul bayt: the family of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

Akhirah: the Hereafter

Ba Alawiyyah Tariqah: a sufi order founded by Muhammad ibn Ali (1178-1255) of the Ba Alawi tribe in the southern part of Arabia

bay'ah: pledging to Allah Almighty on the hand of a pious person

bedouin: a rural Arab

Bismillah: in the Name of Allah

Chistiyyah Tariqah: a sufi order founded by Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chisti (d. 1236) in India

Days of Tashriq: the days of the 'drying of the meat' after the ritual slaughtering on the Day of *Adha* during the period of the *Haj*

dhikr-e-jahr: the audible *dhikr*

Divine or Holy Ahadith: these traditions Allah Almighty had sent to Nabi Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) who communicated them in his own words but they do not form part of the Qur'an

du'a: appeal to Allah; supplication

fard salah: a *salah* that is obligatory, the neglect of which is punishable

nisfu Sha'ban: the middle of the month of *Sha'ban*

pas-e-anfas: guarding of breaths

pir: spiritual director

Qadiriyyah Shadhiliyyah Hashimiyyah Tariqah: the Qadiriyyah trace their origins to Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani (d.1166), the Shadhliyyah, named after Shaykh Abul Hasan al-Shadhili (d. 1258), derives from the tariqah of Shaykh Abu Madyan Shu'ayb (d. 1198), and the Hashimiyyah from Shaykh Muhammad al-Hashimi who had received authorization to be a *murshid* of the Shadhili tariqah from Shaykh Ahmad al-Alawi of Algeria in Damascus in the early 1920's #.

qiblah: the direction Muslims face in prayer

Quraysh: an Arab tribe in ancient Mecca

ratib: a combination of voluntary exercises of devotion

Rifa'iyyah Order: found mainly in the Middle East, was founded by Shaykh Ahmad Rifa'i (d. 1181)

riziq: sustenance granted to one by Allah Almighty

sadaqah (pl. *sadaqat*): voluntary or obligatory material help to the needy (see *zakah*)

Salatul Mashishiyyah: special *Salawat* composed by the Shadhiliyyah Shaykh Abdus-Salam ibn Mashish (d. 1228) whose shrine is in Egypt

Salawat: sending peace, blessings and greetings to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.)

sayyid: a title usually used for a descendent of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) or a very pious person

Shadhili Order: was founded by Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn 'Abd Allah ash-Shadhili (1196/97-1258)

Shafi'iyyah School of Thought: the teachings of Imam Shafi'i (767-820)

Shahadah: the Testimony of Faith: testifying to the oneness of Allah and to Nabi Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) being His Messenger

Shajirah: is the list of *shaykhs* of a *tariqah* from the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) right down to the present incumbent

Shari'ah: the Divine Law

shaykh: a scholar, old person or the head of a sufi order or his representative

silsilah: a chain of scholars or religious authorities

Subh: the dawn obligatory prayer

Suhrawardiyyah Order: is the name of a sufi order founded by Sufi Diya al-din Abu 'n-Najib as-Suhrawardi (1097-1168)

suhur: the early morning meal during *Ramadan*

suhbah (sohbet): an association or sometimes used to refer to the lecture or talk given at such an association

suluk: religious quest along a stipulated road

sunnah: what Nabi Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) said, did or approved of or his overall practice; The word also refers to any action that is not punishable by its negligence but its performance is rewarded.

Suratul Fatihah: the opening chapter of the Qur'an

Suratul Ikhlas: chapter cxii (112), the chapter on purity of faith

tafsir: an explanation of the Qur'an

tajalli: spiritual manifestation

Tarawih Salah: voluntary formal prayers done after the evening prayer in *Ramadan*

tariqah: a sufi order or a method of spiritual approach to Allah

tasawwuf: the process of spiritual striving and purification under the guidance of a spiritual master

tasawwure-shaykh: visualizing the *shaykh*

tawbah: repentance

umrah: the lesser pilgrimage

uswatun hasanah: the best model, used to describe the behaviour of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.)

Wahabi School of Thought: founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) in Saudi Arabia, and which is the official ideology of the Kingdom

wazeefah: is a daily assignment of *adhkar*, *du'as* and/or recitals of the Qur'an. It is sometimes referred to as a *wird*, which is a specific time of the day or night devoted to regular private worship in addition to other obligatory forms of worship.

wird: see *wazeefah*

zakah: a portion of one's wealth claimed by Allah Almighty, under certain conditions, to be given annually to certain categories of the needy

BAY'AH: The pledge to Allah Almighty

Introduction

The word *bay'ah*, as dealt with in this paper, refers mainly to a pledge one makes to Allah Almighty, usually on the hand of an authorized intensely pious person, with regard to one's religious commitment to Him, to His Messenger (s.a.w.s.) and His Message. The pledge is, therefore, a deeply religious action involving the orientation of one's life totally for Him and for His sake. It is as if one is saying: "O my Lord, I have decided to redirect and to dedicate my life and all its activities to Thee." If this is said in all seriousness, and it is supposed to be like that, and one translates into action one's commitment, it can only result in major spiritual grants and Divine Satisfaction. The pledge thus represents the first step towards servanthood to which Allah Almighty brings one. Of course, part of the pledge is the realization that everything is achieved through Allah Almighty, and that it is His Hand that directs. The taking of the hand of the intensely pious person is one's humble submission that Allah authorizes persons on account of their piety to help in the process of religious direction for an individual. Accepting religious authority based on piety is an expression of deep love and respect for those specially blessed by Allah Almighty with such piety. This kind of religious authority based on piety was a process launched by the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.), and it has been carried forward by those who have inherited from him and from other Prophets (a.s.).

It is clear, therefore, that the person taking the pledge must recognize that the one whose hand he is clasping has been authorized to grant such pledge to Allah Almighty. Part of the pledge is the promise to accept that person as a guide in spiritual matters and even affairs of this world. And through this guide one is linked,

through a chain of blessings, back in history, from one guide to another, right up to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.). Similar chains of blessings are recorded in Islamic history with the regard to the transmission of Qur'anic memorization, Prophetic Traditions, and different branches of religious knowledge.

From this it is clear that the pledge is an extremely serious matter. This is because, perhaps for the first time in one's life, one takes an important conscious stand with regard to Islam. Perhaps for the first time, after very serious consideration and deep thought, one says: "O my Lord, I want to walk the path towards Thee, fully conscious of my religious responsibilities. My Lord, guide me in this through Thy authorized intensely pious people."

Aspects of the pledge in the initial history of Islam

The pledge was introduced at the beginning of Islam by the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.). He "had accepted the pledge at different times and on different occasions. He had taken such covenants at the time of accepting Islam, or for performing actions according to all the commandments of Islam."¹ There are, therefore, a number of different pledges although this paper mainly concentrates on the one form. These pledges include the pledge for accepting Islam, for *jihad*, to accept the authority of the Khalifah, against committing major sins and for performing Islamic deeds.² (Of course today, the observing of the pledge has to a large degree disappeared out of Islamic practice, and just respected within the confines of the *tariqah* orders. In these orders one's hand is placed in the hand of the *shaykh* of the order when one pledges to Allah Almighty).

There are a large number of Prophetic Traditions on how the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) used the pledge at all times. Four of

1. Bay'at in Shari'ah, <http://www.alinaam.org.za/tasawwuf/bayat.htm>, p. 2

2. Ibid. pp. 2-3

the more important public demonstrations of the pledge by the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) are the two at Aqabah, the one at Hudaibiyyah and the one with the conquest of Mecca.

The first public demonstration of the pledge took place at Aqabah, a period before the *Hijrah* to Madinah. This event is referred to as the First Pledge at al-Aqabah, and it represents the beginning of the opening up of Madinah for the coming of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.):

... twelve Helpers attended the fair at al-Aqabah – this was the first Aqabah – where they gave the Apostle 'the pledge of women'. This was before the duty of making war was laid upon them.

*... (According to) Ubada b. al-Samit: 'I was present at the first Aqabah. There were twelve of us and we pledged ourselves to the Prophet after the manner of women and that was before war was enjoined, the undertaking being that we should associate nothing with God; we should not steal; we should not commit fornication; nor kill our off-spring; we should not slander our neighbours; we should not disobey him in what was right; if we fulfilled this Paradise would be ours; if we committed any of those sins it was for God to punish or forgive us as He pleased.'*³

The second pledge at Aqabah took place at the fair the following year during the Days of Tashriq:

... the Muslim Ansar (from Madinah) came to the fair with the pilgrims of their people who were polytheists. They met the Apostle at al-Aqabah in the middle of the days of Tashriq, when God intended to honour them and to help His Apostle

3. Guillaume, A. 1968. The life of Muhammad, a translation of Ibn Ishaq's *Sirat Rasul*. Lahore: Oxford University Press. pp. 198-199.

and to strengthen Islam and to humiliate heathenism and its devotees ...

(Relating the events), Ka'b ibn Malik said: "We slept that night among our people in the caravan until when a third of the night had passed we went stealing softly like sandgrouses to our appointment with the Apostle as far as the gully by al-Aqabah. There were seventy-three men with two of our women ... We gathered together in the gully waiting for the Apostle until he came with his uncle al-Abbas who was at that time a polytheist; albeit he wanted to be present at his nephew's business and see that he had a firm guarantee. When he (al-Abbas) sat down he was the first to speak, 'O people of al-Khazraj (the Arabs used the term to cover both Khazraj and Aus⁴). You know what position Muhammad holds among us. We have protected him from our own people who think as we do about him. He lives in honour and safety among his people, but he will turn to you and join you. If you think that you can be faithful to what you had promised him and protect him from his opponents, then assume the burden you have undertaken. But if you think that you will betray and abandon him after he has gone out with you, then leave him now. For he is safe where he is.' We replied, 'You speak, O Apostle, and choose for yourself and for your Lord what you wish.'

"The Apostle spoke and recited the Qur'an and invited men to God and commended Islam and then said, 'I invite your allegiance on the basis that you protect me as you would your women and children' ... Al-Bara' was the first (to pledge) and the people followed him."

Now they bound themselves to war against all and sundry for God and His Apostle, while he promised them for faithful service thus the reward of Paradise.

... Ubada b. al-Samit (related): "We pledged ourselves to war in complete obedience to the Apostle in weal and in woe, in ease and hardship and evil circumstances; that we would not wrong anyone; that we would speak the truth at all times; and that in God's service we would fear the censure of no one."

... The total number of those present at the second Aqabah from the Aus and Khazraj⁵ were seventy-three men and two women who they allege pledged their obedience also. The Apostle used not to strike hand with women; he merely stated the conditions, and if they accepted them, he would say, "Go, I have made a covenant with you."⁶

Of course, with permission to fight and support from some of the people of Madinah, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) ordered the migration to Madinah. The people from Mecca went in small groups while the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) waited for Allah Almighty's permission to do the same.

The third pledge of major historical significance is the *Ridwan* Pledge of Allegiance (the pledge of approval) that took place under a tree at Hudaibiyyah when about 1 400 Muslims pledged themselves to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.). This was the year A.H. 6 when the Messenger (s.a.w.s.) decided to go on *umrah* during the month of *Dhul Qa'dah*. This pledge of Ridwan followed the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah negotiated with the Quraysh by the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.). In terms of the treaty the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) could only return to Mecca the following year. The pledge is described in the following way by Salamah ibn al-Akwa' who said:

We arrived at Hudaibiyyah with the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) and we were fourteen hundred in number. There were

4. Two of the tribes of Medinah.

5. Two of the tribes of Medinah.

6. Guillaume, A. op. cit. pp. 201-212.

fifty goats with us that could not be watered (by the small quantity of water in the local well). So, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) sat on the brink of the well. Either he prayed or spat into the well. The water welled up. We drank and watered (the beasts as well).

Then the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) called us to take the vow of allegiance, as he was sitting at the base of a tree. I was the first man to take the oath. Then other people took the oath. When half the number of people had done so, he said to me: "You take the oath, Salamah." I said: "I was one of those who took the vow in the first instance." He said: "(You may do it) again." Then the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) saw that I was without weapons. He gave me a big or a small shield.

Then he continued to administer vows to the people until it was the last batch of them. He said (to me): "Won't you swear allegiance, Salamah?" I said: "Messenger of Allah, I took the oath with the first batch of the people and then again when you were in the middle of the people." He said: "(It doesn't matter), you may (do so) again." So I took the oath of allegiance thrice (Sahih Muslim).

This is further expanded on by Abdullah ibn Umar:

The people were with the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) on the day of al-Hudaybiyyah, spread out in the shade of the trees. Suddenly the people surrounded the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and started looking at him.

Umar said: "O Abdullah! Go and see why the people are encircling Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) and looking at him." Abdullah ibn Umar then saw the people giving the Pledge of Allegiance to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). So he also gave the Pledge of Allegiance and returned to Umar who went out in his turn and gave the Pledge of Allegiance to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) (Sahih Bukhari).

A very interesting incident happened with the pledge at Hdaybiyyah with regard to Sayyiduna Uthman (r.a.) who was not present at the pledge:

The incident of the Ridwan Pledge of Allegiance happened after Uthman had gone to Mecca. Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) held out his right hand saying: "This is Uthman's hand." He stroked his (other) hand with it saying: "This (pledge of allegiance) is on the behalf of Uthman" (related by Abdullah ibn Umar, Sahih Bukhari). This means that a pledge may be given to one in absentia.

Anas ibn Malik (Sahih Bukhari) stated that the following verse in the Qur'an refers to the Treaty of Hdaybiyyah:

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا

Verily We have granted you a manifest victory (xlviii: 1).

At the time also, according to Anas ibn Malik, the Companions (r.a.) said to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.): "Congratulations and we wish you happiness but what reward shall we get." Allah Almighty then revealed the verse:

لِيَدْخُلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

That He may admit the believing men and women to gardens beneath which rivers flow (xlviii: 5).

These verses, as part of the chapter of *al-Fath* (The Victory), were revealed to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) when he was on his way back to Madinah from Hdaybiyyah. This chapter contains

two important statements on the pledge at Hudaibiyyah. In the one statement, Allah Almighty says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ
فَمَنْ تَكْتَفِ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى
بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَسَيُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

Verily those who pledged to thee do no less than pledge to Allah. The Hand of Allah is over their hands. Then one who violates his oath, does so to the harm of his own soul, and any one who fulfils what he has covenanted with Allah, will soon be granted a great reward (xlviii: 10).

In the other statement, Allah Almighty says:

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ
مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

Allah's Satisfaction was on the believers when they pledged to thee under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, and he sent down tranquility to them, and He rewarded them with a speedy victory (xlviii: 18).

The fourth important public pledge took place after the conquest of Mecca. This pledge is described as follows:

After the conquest, the people gave their oath of allegiance to Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.s.). Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) sat at Qarn Masqalah⁷, and the people came, young and old, men and women, and gave their oath of allegiance based on faith and the testimony that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah.

When the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) had finished receiving the men's oath of allegiance, he accepted the women's oath of allegiance while he was atop As-Safa, with Umar (r.a.) sitting beneath him, receiving the oath of allegiance on behalf of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). They gave their oath of allegiance based on the pledge that they would not associate anything with Allah, they would not steal, they would not commit adultery, they would not kill their children, they would not utter slander intentionally forging falsehood ...and they would not disobey the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in ...(all that Islam ordains).⁸

Lessons learnt

There are a number of lessons about these pledges that one learns from these historical accounts and from other traditions on the matter:

*Although one places one's hand in the hand of a person authorized to take the pledge, the pledge is made to Allah Almighty. During the time of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.), he accepted the pledge but after him it was accepted by those who succeeded him and inherited from him and the other Prophets (a.s.), or those persons' representatives.⁹

*Allah Almighty places His authority and approval (His Hand, according to the verse) on the pledge being taken - of course, if it

7. This is a place-name. Masqalah was a man who lived there during the *Jahiliyyah*

8. Mubarakpuri, Shaykh Safiur-Rahman, 2002. *History of Makkah*. Riyadh: Darussalam, pp. 92-93.

9. In South Africa, I accept the pledge but it is actually to Mawlana Shaykh Nazim of Cyprus, and ultimately to Allah. I also have *amirs* in the other provinces who accept the pledge, and so the links become longer.

is taken in terms of the Divine Law.

*The pledge is of such a highly sensitive spiritual nature that one's soul is corrupted if one does not carry out the terms of the pledge. There is also considerable reward if one abides faithfully to its terms. If one sees the pledge as a "promise" or a "special commitment" one makes to Allah Almighty with regard to one's faith and religious practice, then it is easy to understand its importance.

*Ultimately Allah Almighty is Witness, He sees and He knows, and He judges validity of the pledge and its faithfulness. He witnesses what is in the hearts.

*When one pleases Allah Almighty, He places His Satisfaction on that person and pours Divine Tranquility on him.

*The pledge can also be repeated. This was in fact very common. Awf ibn Malik al-Ashja'i reported:

We, nine, eight or seven men, were in the company of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) and he said: "Why don't you pledge allegiance to the Messenger of Allah?" We had recently pledged allegiance. So we said: "Messenger of Allah, we have already pledged allegiance to you." He again said: "Why don't you pledge allegiance to the Messenger of Allah?" And we said: "Messenger of Allah, we have already pledged allegiance to you." He again said: "Why don't you pledge allegiance to the Messenger of Allah?" We stretched out our hands and said: "Messenger of Allah, we have already pledged allegiance to you. Now tell us (for what we) should pledge allegiance to you." He said: "(You must pledge allegiance) that you will worship Allah only and will not associate anything with Him, (observe) the five prayers, and obey - (and he said one thing in an undertone) - that you would not beg for anything from other people." (As a consequence of that) I saw that some of these people did not ask anyone to pick up the whip for them if it fell down (Sahih Muslim).

*It also appears that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) was reluctant to allow a pledge to be withdrawn. Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari reported:

A bedouin took an oath of allegiance in Islam with the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.). A fever befell the bedouin at Madinah. He came to the Messenger of Allah, and said, "Messenger of Allah, release me from my pledge." The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) refused.

Then he came to him again and said, "Release me from my pledge." The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) refused.

Then he came again and said, "Release me from my pledge." He (again) refused. The bedouin left. The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) said, "Madinah is like the blacksmith's furnace. It removes the impurities and purifies the good" (Al-Muwatta').

*Perhaps the importance of the pledge is best summed-up in the tradition in which Ibn Umar reported:

I heard the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) say: "One who absolves his hand from obedience (by pledging) will meet Allah on the Day of Judgement without any excuse, and one who dies without having taking a pledge will die in a state of ignorance (jahiliyah)" (Sahih Muslim).

The pledge by women

Allah Almighty states in the Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّكَ مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْنَهُنَّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

O Prophet! When the believing women come to thee to pledge to thee, that they will not associate in worship any other whatever with Allah, that they will not steal, that they will not commit adultery, that they will not kill their children, that they will not utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood, and they will not disobey thee in any matter, then accept their pledge, and pray to Allah for forgiveness (for them) for Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful (lx: 12).

In a report, A'isha (r.a.) states:

*When the believing women came to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as emigrants, he used to test them in accordance with the order of Allah: **O you who believe! When believing women come to you as emigrants, examine them ... (lx: 10).** So if any one of those believing women accepted the above mentioned conditions, she accepted the conditions of faith.*

When they agreed on those conditions and confessed that verbally Allah's Apostle (s.a.w.s.) would say to them: "Go, I have accepted your oath of allegiance." By Allah, the hand of Allah's Apostle (s.a.w.s.) never touched the hand of any woman, but he only used to take their pledge of allegiance orally.

By Allah, Allah's Apostle did not take the pledge of allegiance of the women except in accordance with what Allah had ordered him. When he accepted their pledge of allegiance he would say to them: "I have accepted your oath of allegiance" (Sahih Bukhari).¹⁰

The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) also took the pledge in other ways, other than just doing it orally. In a report from Amir ash-

10. I found the following tradition in *Riyadh as-Salihin* by Imam Nawawi (translated by S.M. Madni Abbasi, vol. 1, p. 346): Anas ibn Malik (r.a.) relates that, "A maidservant, from amongst the maidservants of Madinah, would catch hold of the hand of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and take him where she desired (to solve her grievance) (Bukhari).

Sha'bi, it is narrated that:

When the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) received allegiance from women, his hand was covered with a cloth.¹¹

A third method used by the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) is reported in a tradition narrated by the grandfather of Amr ibn Shu'ayb:

When the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) emigrated to Madinah, some women who had become Muslim went to him and said: "Messenger of Allah, our men have given allegiance to you and we also want to give you our allegiance." The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) called for a vessel of water and put his hand in it and then each woman put her hand in it. This was how her allegiance took place.¹²

The pledge by children

The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.), "according to the books of Nisa'i and Tirmidhi gave initiation to Umaymah bint Ruqiyyah (when she was not seven yet). It was related by Tabarani that Izza bint Khayyil took initiation from the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) when she was not yet seven. It was also narrated by Tabarani in an authentic tradition that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) gave bay'ah to al-Hasan, al-Hussain, Abdullah ibn Abbas and Abdullah ibn Ja'far when they were seven years of age."¹³

There is, however, a report from Abdullah ibn Hisham that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) refused to grant the pledge to him because he was too young. The report states:

Abdullah's mother Zaynab bint Humayd took him to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and said: "O Allah's Messenger! Take the pledge of allegiance from him."

But he said: "He is still too young for the pledge," and he

11. Ibn Sa'd, M. 1995. *The Women of Madina*. London: Ta Ha Publishers, p. 1.

12. Ibid. p. 6.

13. www.naqshbandi.org/topics/taking.htm, p. 2

passed his hand on his (i.e. Abdullah's) head and invoked for Allah's blessing for him.

Zuhrah ibn Ma'bad stated that he used to go with his grandfather, Abdullah ibn Hisham, to the market to buy foodstuff. Ibn Umar and ibn az-Zubayr would meet him and say to him: "Be our partner, as the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) invoked Allah to bless you." So, he would be their partner, and very often he would get a camel's load (of goods) and send it home (Sahih Bukhari).

The bay'ah in some of the sufi orders at the Cape

The Naqshbandi Order

The head of the Naqshbandi Order in the world is Mawlana Shaykh Nazim al-Haqqani of Lefke, Cyprus. The author is his Southern African representative. Of course, when one is in Lefke one pledges directly to Mawlana Shaykh Nazim al-Haqqani but anywhere else in the world his representatives receive the pledge on behalf of him, or others appointed by him or by his representatives.¹⁴ In a letter to me (see page 16) Mawlana Shaykh Nazim explains.

The pledge is done by placing one's hand in the hand of the one receiving the pledge.¹⁵ The former then recites the following:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

14. In South Africa there are quite a number of individuals authorized to give bay'ah to Mawlana Shaykh Nazim. At the Cape is the author and Muhammad Salih Salaam, in Gauteng there is Shahzad Govinder, in Kwa Zulu-Natal, Dr Yusuf Salejee and in the Eastern Cape Shaykh Majedie Jardine. The pledge is also given telephonically to those who cannot be reached otherwise. Sometimes a pledge may be given without the usual contact between the persons involved in the pledge, as was the case of Nabi Muhammad's (s.a.w.s.) pledge for Sayyidatuna Uthman (r.a.) at the pledges at Hudaibiyyah.

15. In the case of women the pledge is given without hand-on-hand contact. She holds on to the walking stick or a cloth that the shaykh or his representative keeps in his hand. In the event of a large crowd, the one in front places his hand in the hand of the shaykh or his representative, and the rest stands in a line behind the one being given the pledge, each one placing his right hand on the right shoulder of the one in front of him. In this way every one takes the pledge.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمَنْ

كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِ يَنْكُثْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِمَا

عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَسَيُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

Allah's Satisfaction was on the believers when they pledged to thee under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, and he sent down tranquility to them, and He rewarded them with a speedy victory (xlviii: 18).

رَضِينَا بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا وَبِسَيِّدِنَا وَنَبِيِّنَا

مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ رَسُولًا وَنَبِيًّا وَ

بِالْقُرْآنِ كِتَابًا وَاللَّهُ عَلَى مَا نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ

وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

We are satisfied with Allah as Lord, with Islam as religion, with our Master and Prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.s.), as Messenger and Prophet, and with the Qur'an as Book, and Allah is Witness and Guardian over what we say. All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

(In my case I would say): "On the authority granted to me by Shaykh Hisham Kabbani,¹⁶ I grant you bay'ah to Mawlana Shaykh Nazim, the Grand Shaykh of the Naqshbandi Tariqah."

اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ حَقُّ، وَاللَّهُ اللَّهُ حَقُّ، وَاللَّهُ اللَّهُ حَقُّ

Allah, Allah, Allah is Ultimate Truth. Allah, Allah, Allah is Ultimate Truth. Allah, Allah, Allah is Ultimate Truth.

16. Shaykh Hisham Kabbani of the USA, Mawlana Shaykh Nazim's representative there, had granted the author authorization on behalf of our Shaykh.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 TO ALL OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS AND
 MURIDS AND MURIDAS IN SOUTH AFRICA
 ASSALAMUWALAIKUM WA RAHAMATULLAH!
 T'ALA WA BARAKATU!

THIS LETTER IS TO MAKE IT
 WELL-KNOWN THAT SHAYKH YUSUF
 D'ACOSTA IS THE AUTHORIZED AND SOLE
 REPRESENTATIVE OF MAULANA SHAYKH
 NAZIM AL-HAQQANI IN SOUTH
 AFRICA. ALL NAQSHBANDI-HAQQANI
 FOLLOWERS IN SOUTH AFRICA WILL
 GIVE HIM THEIR HELP AND ASSISTANCE.
 SHAYKH D'ACOSTA WILL APPOINT
 WHOMEVER HE LIKES AS HIS ASSISTANTS.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الشَّيْخُ مُحَمَّدُ النَّصْرَةُ الْعَلِي
 الشَّيْخُ مُحَمَّدُ النَّصْرَةُ الْعَلِي
 الشَّيْخُ مُحَمَّدُ النَّصْرَةُ الْعَلِي
 26.7.2005
 Cyprus

إِلَى حَضْرَةِ النَّبِيِّ وَآلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ الْكَرَامِ وَإِلَى أَرْوَاحِ إِخْوَانِهِ مِنَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ
 وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ وَمَشَائِخِنَا فِي الطَّرِيقَةِ النَّقْشَبَنْدِيَّةِ الْعَلِيَّةِ بَعَةً وَإِلَى أَرْوَاحِ
 مَشَائِخِنَا فِي الطَّرِيقَةِ النَّقْشَبَنْدِيَّةِ الْعَلِيَّةِ خَاصَّةً إِلَى رُوحِ إِمَامِ الطَّرِيقَةِ وَ
 غَوْثِ الْخَلِيقَةِ خَوَاجَةِ شَاهِ بَهَاءِ الدِّينِ النَّقْشَبَنْدِ مُحَمَّدِ الْأَوْيسِ الْبُخَارِيِّ ،

وَأُسْتَاذِنَا سَيِّدَنَا سُلْطَانَ الْأَوْلِيَاءِ سَيِّدِ الشَّيْخِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْفَائِزِ الدَّغَسْتَانِيِّ ،
 وَ سَيِّدِنَا وَ مَوْلَانَا سَيِّدِنَا الشَّيْخِ مُحَمَّدٍ نَازِمِ الْحَقَّانِ مُؤَيَّدِ الدِّينِ وَ سَيِّدِنَا
 عَبْدَ الْخَالِقِ الْخُجْدَوَانِيِّ وَ أَهْلَ الْخَتَمِ الْخَوَاجِكَانَ وَ سَائِرِ سَادَاتِنَا وَ
 الصِّدِّيقِينَ الْفَاتِحَةَ.

...to the soul of the Prophet Muhammad, (s.a.w.s.) and to his
 family and distinguished Companions, and the souls of his
 brothers from the Prophets and Messengers, and those who
 served the Law, and the souls of the four Imams, and the souls of
 our shaykhs in the exalted Naqshbandi Order, especially the soul
 of the Imam of the Order, the succour of creation, Shah
 Baha'uddin Naqshband Muhammad al-Uwaysi al-Bukhari, and
 our Master, Sultan of the Saints, Master Shaykh Abdullah
 al-Fa'iz ad-Daghastani, and our Master Shaykh Muhammad
 Nazim al-Haqqani, the supporter of the religion, and our Master
 Abdul-Khaliq Khujdawani, and the family of the Masters and the
 Righteous, al-Fatihah.

Once one becomes a *murid*, having made the declaration to Allah
 Almighty, one continues with a strict observance of one's religious
 duties, both obligatory and non-obligatory. Part of this is to put on
 a sound religious footing one's relationship with Allah, with
 Allah's final Messenger (s.a.w.s.), with his *shaykh* and others with
 whom one has family, neighbourly and other connections. Under
 the guidance of one's *shaykh* one starts to lead a deeply religious
 life, strictly in terms of the Divine Law, pleading all the time to
 Allah Almighty for spiritual grants. And combining all of these
 with hard work in the Cause of Allah.

There are many things the *murid* has to do, things to which one
 is introduced very gradually until, after many months, or even

longer, one is able to perform the full package quite comfortably. The full package, not in order of importance, consists of:

- (a). a daily *wazeefah* consisting of *adhkar* and *du'as*;
- (b). observing what one is able to of all the many daily *nafl salahs* such as *Tahajjud*, *Ishraq*, *Duha*, *Awwabin*, and *Witr*. In addition, one should also try every day to do *Salatush-Shukr* and *Salatut-Tasbih* and observe very strictly all the *sunnah salahs* attached to the *fard salahs*;
- (c). spending up to about half an hour after every *fard salah* doing the many *adhkar*, *du'as* and recital of parts of the Qur'an that have come down to us from the Prophetic Practice.
- (d). attending one or more of the many congregational *adhkar* (the *Khatmul Khwajagan*) that occur from Thursday evenings to Sunday mornings, especially the Friday evening one;
- (e). doing the *sunnah* Monday and/or Thursday fasting and the many other *sunnah* fasting during the year that had also come down to us from the Prophetic Practice.
- (f). generously giving *sadaqat* to those in need;
- (g). working hard amongst poor people by building small mosques for them for praying and teaching purposes and for the making of *adhkar*, providing washing facilities, giving them food and clothing, and helping in any way one can, all in the Cause of Islam.
- (h). doing all the prescribed programmes of *adhkar*, *salahs* and *du'as* that occur during certain months such as *Rajab*, *nisfu Sha'ban* and *Ramadan*, for example; and
- (i). consciously using all the different forms of worship as a process of cleansing one of all bad personal and social habits, called the "purification of the self".¹⁷

17. For further information on the "full package" see *Naqshbandi Devotions and Practices* (2007), which may be obtained from the organization's office.

The new *murid* usually commences with the following:

Wazeefah Naqshbandiyyah

(Once every 24 hours preferably after *Fajr*)

Part 1:

- a) The *Shahadah* three times أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
(*Ash-hadu alla ilaha illallah wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluh*).
- b) *Astaghfirullah* أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ 25 times.
- c) *Fatihah* one time with the intention of participating in the blessings sent down with it when it was revealed in Mecca.
- d) *Amanar-rasul*
- e) *Alam nashrah* ... 7 times.
- f) *Ikhlas* (Surah 112) 11 times.
- g) *Falaq* (Surah 113) 1 time.
- h) *Nas* (Surah 114) 1 time.
- i) *Lailahailallah* لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ 10 times, with the last one being completed with مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ *Muhammadur Rasulullah*.
- j) *Salawat ash-Sharifah* 10 times اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَسَلِّمْ
(*Allahumma salli ala Muhammadin wa ala ali Muhammadin wa sallim*).
- k) *Ihda'*, that is, presenting the reward of the above recitation to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and all the other Prophets (a.s.) and the *Awliya'* especially the *shaykhs* of the *Naqshbandi Tariqah*.
- l) Wrapping it up with the *Fatihah*, with the intention of sharing in the Divine Graces and *tajalli* that were sent down when the *Fatihah* was revealed in Madinah the second time.
- m) *Allahu Allahu Allahu Haq* 3 times.
- n) *Salawat* (10 times) as above, and *du'a*.

Part 2:

- o) *Dhikr* of the Glorious Name *Allah* 1 500 times;
- p) *Salawat* 300 to 1 000 times
- q) One-thirtieth (*juz'*) of the Qur'an, or *Ikhlas* 100 times;
- r) One chapter of *Dala'il Khayrat* or 100 *Salawat*

Part 3:

OPTIONAL (each one 100 times)

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (La ilaha illallah)

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ (Astaghfirullah hal azeem wa atubu ilay)

يَا لَطِيفُ (Ya Latif)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (Bismilla hirrahma nirrahim)

حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ (Hasbiyal lahu wa ni'mal wakeel)

This *wazeefah* is the first level of *adhkar* the *murid* practises. Later, as one progresses, one is then allowed to do the "*Dhikr* of the Prepared" each day. This involves an increase in the recitation of the word "Allah" to 5 000 (2 500 with the tongue and the rest silently) and the *Salawat* to 300 per day except on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays when it has to be increased to 500. Later the *murid* moves to the "*Dhikr* of People of Determination", which is also done every day. The word "Allah" is recited 10 000 times (5 000 with the tongue and the rest silently). The 300 *Salawat* is increased to 1 000 and the 500 to 2 000.

In the *Naqshbandi Tariqah*, the *murid* is taken through seven levels of spiritual development. At the seventh level, if Allah so wishes, he is given some very special spiritual grants, which he may or may not know about.

I wanted to know what the impact of *tariqah* was on an "ordinary citizen" so I posed two questions to Fowzia Clark who works in the Naqshbandi office:

Q: What made you come into the Naqshbandi *Tariqah*?

On the day of my late husband's janaazah, another widow came to me and said: "You will find that this great loss will bring you much closer to Allah Almighty." How true, because it was as if a spiritual shift change had occurred from that point forward. As a young widow, his death at a very young age was a reminder for me that Allah Almighty may take us away at any time and what preparations would we have made for Akhirah? In a sense his death came as an eye-opener that the time to start walking the path is now and not when I'm older as I might not live to see old-age. At his janaazah I also made niyyah to go for hajj and it was in Shaykh Yusuf's hajj classes that I was introduced to the practicing of daily adhkar and nafl salahs and where I was inspired towards strengthening my relationship with my Lord.

In 2000, Allah Almighty granted me the honour of meeting Mawlana Shaykh Nazim on his visit to the Cape and I was totally awed at this man's aura of humbleness. Mawlana Shaykh Nazim was exactly as I always envisaged, as a child, the pious people in stories of the prophets to be like. Mawlana Shaykh Nazim inspired me towards the path he is walking through his sohbet and messages he brought to the Cape and I started attending regular Naqshbandi dhikrs on a Friday night. Shaykh Yusuf's short lectures after the dhikrs about the remembrance of Allah had further inspired me to read about the Naqshbandi tariqah and it was at one of the congregational dhikrs that Allah Almighty granted me the opportunity of taking bay'ah.

Q: How did the taking of bay'ah impact on your Islam?

Since taking bay'ah, there is an Allah-consciousness approach to everything that I attempt in life, always wary of pleasing my Lord and the realization that even if I had to thank Allah Almighty every second of my life, I would not be able to thank and glorify him enough.

The importance of having a shaykh as one's spiritual guide and connection to Nabi Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) has been another significance in my life brought about by swearing allegiance to Allah. Alhamdulillah, Allah Almighty granted me the honour of visiting my shaykh, Mawlana Shaykh Nazim, in 2006. In Lefke, Cyprus where he resides, it is the perfect learning ground to address one's ego as one are exposed to the bare basics of life and the realization that not much is actually required to be for Allah. There one also gets the opportunity to observe Mawlana Shaykh Nazim and his family's lifestyle, looking towards those who have attained high spiritual stations, so that we may be inspired to strive and emulate them as best we can.

One of the statements Mawlana Shaykh Nazim includes in almost all of his sohbet is that of "Listen and obey" and it has been something that has stuck with me and which I do my best to apply at all times. Shaykh Yusuf told me once that he always says "yes" to his shaykh, no matter what. And this made me realise that it is actually "that simple" - when one listens to your shaykh and obeys you cannot go wrong. In fact, life is bliss with your shaykh as your guide. For example, Shaykh Yusuf had prompted me into remarrying and had even recommended a match. This was further emphasized by Mawlana Shaykh Nazim in Lefke with the parting words: "You must get married". So back home the meeting with the recommended murid was arranged, and within two months we were married, Alhamdulillah.

The impact of Mawlana Shaykh Nazim's words: "Why wait?" had further encouraged me to plan a very early retirement from the corporate world, striving towards being nothing, and working only in Allah's way.

Now my whole life revolves around Naqshbandi, striving towards a balance of a third of the day in worship, a third working and a third in rest.

The Qadiriyyah Shadhiliyyah Hashimiyyah Tariqah

The present head of this *tariqah* is Shaykh Hazim Naa-if Abu Ghazalah, currently residing in Amman, Jordan, who visits South Africa annually. His representatives in South Africa, and most probably elsewhere, are called *khulafa* (or *khalifas*)¹⁸ - those foremost in rank for humble service to others.

The pledge given on the hand of the Shaykh to the *khalifas* is as follows:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**(In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate,
the Most Merciful)**

General authorization for the *khalifas* in the *Qadiriyyah Shadhiliyyah Hashimiyyah Tariqah*

Allah, the Most High says:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

18. In Cape Town the *khulafa* are Hafiz Edries Mohamad, Imam Hoosain Dramat, Dr Goolam Hayat, Imam Faizal Lilla and Shaykh Shaheed Salam-Madatt. There are also *khulafa* in Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg.

Call to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and good admonition and argue with them with ways that are best (xvi: 125).

Since (the use of) permission came (to us) from the Prophetic Practice, (and) used by people of high goals, we grant permission to the brother in Allah,
(Name of the *khalifah*)
to give sermons and the *bay'ah* of the *tariqah* on our behalf, and to call to the Book of Allah and the guidance of His Messenger (s.a.w.s.) and of the renowned *shaykhs* in the chain of our *tariqah*. And Allah is the Best Guide from error.

The *wird* of the *bay'ah* of the *Qadiriyyah Shadhiliyyah Hashimiyyah Tariqah*
(The *murid* has to recite this after *Salatul-Fajr* and *Salatul-Isha'*)

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ السَّمِيعِ الْعَلِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

(once)

I seek the protection of Allah, the All-Hearer, the All-Knowing, from the accursed Shaytan

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(once)

In the Name of Allah, the Most Goodness, the Most Merciful

وَمَا تَقْدِمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ وَأَعْظَمُ أَجْزًا وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

(once)

And whatever good you send forth for your souls, you shall find it in Allah's Presence, better and greater in reward. And seek forgiveness from Allah. Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful (lxxiii: 20).

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ

(ninety-nine times)

I seek forgiveness from Allah

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ وَآتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

(once)

I seek forgiveness from Allah. There is no god other than He, the Ever-living, the Ever-Subsisting, and I turn in repentance to Him.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

(once)

Allah and His angels send peace and blessings on the Prophet. O you who believe, send peace and blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salute (xxxiii: 56).

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدِكَ وَرَسُولِكَ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلِّمْ

(ninety-nine times)

O Allah, send blessings on our Master Muhammad, Thy servant and Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, and upon his family and Companions, and send him greetings.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدِكَ وَرَسُولِكَ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ وَعَلَى آلِهِ
وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلِّمْ تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا بِقَدْرِ عَظَمَةِ ذَاتِكَ فِي كُلِّ وَقْتٍ وَحِينٍ

(once)

*O Allah, send peace and blessings on our Master Muhammad,
Thy servant and Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, and upon
his family and Companions, and send him greetings
abundantly, by an amount of (the highest) exaltedness that is in
every period and time.*

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

(once)

Know that there is no god other than Allah.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

(ninety-nine times)

*There is no god other than Allah alone. No partner has He. To
Him belongs the kingdom. All praises be to Him and His
Decree is established over all things.*

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ سَيِّدُنَا مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

(once)

*There is no god other than Allah. Our Master Muhammad is
the Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah
be on him.*

Then recite:

Suratul Ihlas (once)

Suratul Fatihah (once)

Suratul Waqi'ah (once)

We also advise the *murid* (the seeker of Allah) to recite the *Shadhiliyyah* litanies and *wirds* especially the *Hisbul Bahr* (the Litany of the Sea) after each *salah*, the *Salatul Mashishiyyah* and the *Shadhiliyyah Wazeefah* (called the *wird* of the *bay'ah* previously) after the *salahs* of *Isha'* and *Fajr*, and *Suratul Mulk* after the *Isha'* *Salah*.

In addition, the *murid* has to recite *أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْخَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ* (thrice) and *لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ* (thrice) after each *salah*. We further advise the *murid* to continue remembering Allah and to be always mindful of Him.

As in the case of the *Naqshbandiyyah*, the *murids* in this Order are introduced very slowly to the different spiritual practices.

After the brother authorized to give the pledge (the *muqaddam*) accepts the pledge from the seeker of Allah, he says to him: "I give this *tariqah* to you on behalf of our *shaykh*, Shaykh Hazim Abu Ghazala, the poor servant of Allah, the Most High." The seeker replies: "I accept this pledge from you on behalf of my *shaykh*. I swear by Allah to comply with the Law of Allah and His Messenger (s.a.w.s.)."

The document, authorizing all of these, is signed by Shaykh Hazim Abu Ghazala (the servant of the *Qadiriyyah Shadhiliyyah Hashimiyyah Tariqah*), dated 5 January 2003.

Hafiz Edries Mohamed¹⁹, who is also the imam of the Maitland Mosque in Cape Town, explained the following with regard to the Qur'an:

19. Interview, 6 November 2007.

Shaykh Ghazala has given us instructions pertaining to the Qur'an. He is a Hafizul Quran and also a member of the Jamiyyatu Darul Quran in Amman, Jordan. He has also written extensively on the tafsir of the Qur'an from a tassawuf point of view. Therefore, one of his instructions to us is to connect to the Qur'an. Shaykh has made it very easy for us. He has given us a daily recitation that we should do in the morning and that is we start off with Surah Yasin and also the Prophetic Traditions pertaining to Surah Yasin. After Surah Yasin, we have to recite Surah Waqi'ah. After Maghrib we have to recite Surah Waqi'ah again, and after Isha' Surah Mulk. On Fridays, the recommendation of the Prophetic Traditions is to recite Suratul Kahf.

Besides these, we have to recite parts of the Qur'an at our convenience. There's no instruction that we have to complete the Qur'an over a certain period. Particularly during Ramadan, shaykh has given instructions that we need to connect on a daily basis with the Qur'an.

I was interested in knowing what had motivated Hafiz Edries to take bay'ah, and to take it in this Order. He replied as follows:

I think you have been my inspiration. During my varsity years I was exposed to tasawwuf but just as a word. That was in my younger years when the people I associated with searched for a path. We were caught up in reading of the works of the people of tasawwuf. They introduced me to read some of the works particularly of the perennialists, but the English and terminology was definitely too complicated. I was captured by the fact that there's a strong connection through tasawwuf to Allah Almighty. In my later years I met up with a group at the Ghousia Manzil in Athlone and they were doing dhikr as well. It appealed to me and I attended a few of their functions but I didn't connect too well because of the language barrier of the

Urdu language. I couldn't understand a word.

Then in 1992, I attended your hajj classes in Kensington and you introduced dhikrs at the end of the class. That appealed to me a lot. From there onwards, the readings started and then I also met As-Sayyid Muhammad ibn 'Alawi al-Maliki when he came to the Azzawiyyah Masjid. I was pleased to be in his presence and also received bay'ah to study of his works. And that started me off to understanding a little bit more of tasawwuf. Then when Shaykh Haazim Abu Ghazala came, I embraced the Shadhiliyyah Tariqah.

I wanted to delve further into his commitment to Islam and the impact of the bay'ah on his religious life, and I said to him: "I want to ask you a very personal question because you have taken bay'ah, you're a khalifah of this Order, you have a good academic background, you come from a teaching background, you've done hifz and other studies in Islam. Tell me, what do you think the impact of taking bay'ah has been on your life and on your Islam?" He replied as follows:

I have always marvelled at the manner in which the Companions (r.a.) had pledged to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.), and that particular concept has always been in my mind because somehow or the other I felt lost because I could not do the same. When the concept came up of bay'ah through shaykhs, I could understand with my limited knowledge that this bay'ah gives me a link in an uninterrupted chain from shaykh to his shaykh to his shaykh right up to Nabi Muhammad (s.a.w.s.). This gave me the link to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) probably about fourteen hundred and odd years after him (s.a.w.s.). So for myself, on a personal level, I felt that I would be lost without the bay'ah. How could I call myself of being of the Nation of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and I do not have any pledge? I would go as far as saying that a person that has no

bay'ah has no connection with him (s.a.w.s.). This is what the Companions (r.a.) did. This is the Prophetic Practice. To me this is very important. I treat it as very sacred. I think every Muslim should be connected, and that is why I have instructed my whole family to be connected. I would not want to die and be taken away from this earth and not be connected in this way and [not] be under the flag of Nabi Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) on the Last Day. So that's on a more personal level.

From the perspective of Islam, the concept of bay'ah is misunderstood. Historians consider that it took place at a certain time and that is the end of it. But they could not understand the important implication that through bay'ah, one is actually pledging oneself to Allah Almighty. That is my limited understanding.

I wanted to explore his understanding more and said: "This is also a bit personal, so you may answer whichever way you like. Do you feel that being in tasawwuf has brought about a qualitative change in your religion? This is very important. You have increased the quantity of your worship. Has this increase in quantity, perhaps in a humble way, brought about a change in the quality of your Islam?"

Tasawwuf has definitely brought about a complete change in my life. Firstly, the understanding that I received is that spirituality has to do with adab, with refined behaviour. In tasawwuf we show humility, fight against our egos, pride and envy, and all those negative qualities that we need to protect ourselves against. These are the things that I have really built on in my life, and have created for me a different lifestyle. Although one can never say that one has perfected that lifestyle because it is a path that is continuous. At some level one could measure oneself and see how terribly one has failed. But one thing I can say is that through tasawwuf has come not

only a change but a complete different attitude of understanding Islam.

I think at one stage I was just pouring in knowledge. I almost wanted to know everything. You know, if there was a matter about history, I would read up, and buy and invest in history books. If there was a matter of jurisprudence, I would explore that. Eventually when I came to understanding a little bit about tassawuf, I came to realize how I had wasted my time. I actually feel bad about that. I spent so much time in different types of reading when I should've guided my reading with spirituality. I should have looked at the spiritual part of history, the spiritual part of jurisprudence. In fact I'm busy throwing off a lot of things. Because I've connected with the Shafi'iyah Madh-hab, I feel very strongly connected with Imam Nawawi's works, and that of other pious people in the madh-hab. I have tried to do my studies through a spiritual perspective. I've gone so far that even when I do research on Arabic, just to go over the grammar, I feel I must take on the work of people that have a connection with Nabi Muhammad (s.a.w.s.). I don't know if that sounds weird, but for me this is how it has been. In fact in my own case with my own little library, I've separated my works into what's special and all the other works that I keep but I have put them on one side. Maybe it will be of benefit at a later stage but for now, Alhamdu lillah, I don't want to waste time. Basically now, anything that I do, or any research or any study, there must be a connection with the chain of shaykhs in the Order. And that is what tasawwuf has done to me and I think that it has given authenticity to my studies.

The Chistiyyah Tariqah²⁰

This Order in South Africa is usually associated with the name of

20. Most of the information for this section was supplied by Hafiz Fuzayl Soofi of Durban.

Shah Ghulam Muhammad or Soofi Saheb (d. 1910) who came to this country in 1895. At the Cape the Order was later firmly established by Mawlana Abdul-Latif (d. 1916), a later khalifah of Soofi Saheb, who, under the guidance of Soofi Saheb, laid the foundations of the Habibiyyah complex in Athlone.

The following appellations were commonly added to Mawlana Abdul-Latif's name: *Al-Chishti al-Nizami al-Hafizi al-Habibi al-Siddiqi*. *Al-Chishti* refers to the name of the Order (*Al-Chishtiyyah*), *al-Nizami* to the branch of the Order traced back to Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Mehboob Elahi (d. 1325), *al-Hafizi* to a further branch traced back to Khwaja Hafiz Muhammad Ali or Hafiz Paak (d. 1849) and *al-Habibi* to the name Khwaja Habib Ali Shah of Hyderabad (d. 1906), the shaykh of Soofi Saheb and Mawlana Abdul-Latif. Soofi Saheb, who later became a fully authorized shaykh, had the following appellations added to his name: *al-Siddiqi al-Qadiri al-Chishti al-Nizami al-Habibi*. The use of *al-Siddiqi* is because Mawlana Abdul-Latif and Soofi Saheb are both from the family of Abu Bakr al-Siddique (r.a.). When he became a full shaykh of the Order he chose the following persons as his *khalifas*: Mawlana Abdul Latif Qazi, Mohamed Ebrahim Soofi, Abdul Aziz Soofi, Yusuf Ali Shah, Hafiz Hoosain and Munshi Mia.²¹ Today the Order associated with the Habibiyyah complex in Athlone and the Soofi family in Durban and elsewhere is called the *Chisti Nizami Habibi Soofi Order* or also the *Chistiyyah Bishtiyyah Order*.

The ceremonial aspects of the *bay'ah* in this Order have evolved over the centuries. The more classical forms of *bay'ah* in the era of Khwaja Nizamuddin Awliya (d. 1325), involved the clipping of portions of the hair from all four sides of the head, and at the time of the *bay'ah* the *murid* was given a *kulah char tarki* symbolically signifying the renouncement of all desires, namely the

21. *Shijra*, Soofie Sahib-Badsha Peer, undated.

abandonment of desires for this world, greed for rewards of the Hereafter, abandonment of seeking to seek and abandonment of abandoning. A *kharqa* of *tawbah* was also conferred on the *murid*, to denote his entry into the path of greater Allah-consciousness.

Obviously some of these conventions have fallen away as today many people enter into *tariqah* purely for the sake of blessings, and not as serious initiates of the path. If a person takes *bay'ah* in order to pursue *suluk*, then these ceremonial rituals may still be performed at the discretion of the shaykh. Generally, a *murid* is initiated into the *Chishtiyyah* Order, but it is not uncommon for him to be initiated into the *Qadiri Habibi* Order as well. For an aspirant on the path of *suluk*, it is also possible that he may be initiated into the *Chishtiyyah*, *Qadiriyyah*, *Naqshbandiyyah*, *Suhrawardiyyah* and any other Orders or paths, as well as their approximately 360 branches.

During the initiation ceremony, the aspirant places his hand upon the hand of the shaykh, which is turned up, and sometimes a blessed relic of the shaykh like a turban or a shawl is utilized, particularly when there are males and females or there is a very large crowd. During the *bay'ah* the aspirant is asked to focus his gaze upon the *latifa-e-khafi* of the shaykh, which is situated between the eyebrows above the nose, while the shaykh transmits, amongst other things, the spiritual blessings to the aspirant through this channel.

Method of Initiation

- * The aspirant performs *wudu*.
- * The shaykh wearing a *kharqa* sits on a prayer mat with back to the *qiblah* facing the incumbent who, with back straight, presses his knees against those of the shaykh.
- * The aspirant places his right hand onto the right hand of the shaykh, which faces upwards. The hand of the aspirant faces downward.

*The *shaykh* recites *Suratul-Fatihah* in honour of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.), all the Divine Messengers (a.s.), the *ahlul bayt*, the wives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.), the Righteous Companions, the Successors (*tabi'een*) and the Successors of the Successors, Shaykh Abdul-Qadir Jilani (r.a.), the Supreme Helper (*Ghawth al-Azam*) amongst the hierarchy of *Awliya'*, the shaykhs of the chains of transmission of the four main Spiritual Orders, especially the *Qadiriyyah Habibiyyah* and the *Chishtiyyah Nizamiyyah Habibiyyah* Orders, and scholars who put their knowledge into practice (the *ulama'ul amileen*), and the *shaykh* of the present *shaykh*.

* The *shaykh* asks for support (*madad*) from the spirituality of the Order for himself and the aspirant.

* The *shaykh* tells the incumbent disciple to acknowledge with certainty that this is the hand of his *Pir*, so and so, whose representative the *shaykh* is, and that he is linking him to the *Chishtiyyah* Order, and to the *Ghawth al-Azam* (r.a.), Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti (r.a.) and Khwaja Habib Ali Shah (r.a.).

* The aspirant is asked to recite:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ رَبِّي مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وَخَطِيئَةٍ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

I seek forgiveness from Allah, my Lord, from all sins and transgressions and I turn in repentance to Him.

* The *shaykh* prompts the aspirant to recite *Suratul-Fatihah* once and *Suratul-Ikhlās* 3 times with *Bismillah* each time.

* The *shaykh* then says: "Upon the hand of this servant of the servants of the Spiritual Masters do you pledge allegiance to:

Khwaja

Khwaja Shah Muhammad Ibrahim (r.a.)

Khwaja Soofi Saheb (r.a.)

Khwaja Habib Ali (r.a.)

Khwaja Sayyid Muhammad Hafiz (r.a.)

Khwaja Sulayman of Taunsa (r.a.)

Khwaja Nur Muhammad (r.a.) of Mahar

Khwaja Fakhruddin (r.a.) of Delhi

Khwaja Nasiruddin Chishti (r.a.)

Khwaja Nizamuddin Chishti (r.a.)

Khwaja Fariduddin Chishti (r.a.)

Khwaja Qutubuddin Chishti (r.a.)

Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti (r.a.)

Hazrath Shaykh Abu Muhammad Abd al-Qadir Jilani al-Ghawth al-Azam (r.a.)

Hazrath Ali (r.a.), al-Murtuza, the Elect

The Cause of Creation, the Beloved of Allah Almighty, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.)."

* Then the *shaykh* takes the pledge, asking three times:

"Have you committed your four limbs to steadfastness on the *Shari'ah*?"

"Have you given your heart in the love of Allah Almighty?"

* Thereafter the *shaykh* recites *Habibi-Fatihah* (سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ) and says: "O Khwaja Habib! Through my representation, so and so has entered into the *Silsilah Chishtiyyah Nizamiyyah Habibiyyah* and *Silsilah Qadiriyyah Habibiyyah*. I hand him over to you. Enable him to perform good deeds and let him remain steadfast on the *Shari'ah* and *Tariqah*. Safeguard him from the affliction of evil of human and jinn, *Ameen*."

* Now the *murid* places his head upon the knees of the *shaykh*, kisses them, goes back and performs *du'a* in the heart. He is given a petal to eat or sharbat to drink. It is optional for him to look at the *shaykh* and drink in three gulps.

* After the ceremony is concluded, a few essential teachings are taught by the *shaykh* such as the fulfillment of one's Islamic duties,

no spite, envy, lies, slander and backbiting, to seek forgiveness, recite *Salawat*, etc.

* As a complement to the strictest adherence to the tenets of the *Shari'ah*, the following are also taught: *dhikr-e-jahr*, *pas-e-anfas* and the *tasawwure-shaykh*. In addition to all of these, the barest minimum wird is:

Salawat: thrice

يَا حَبِيبُ (Ya Habib): 33 times

يَا حَافِظُ (Ya Hafiz): 33 times

Recitation of the *Shajirah*.

Other *awrad* are taught to the *murid* in accordance with his specific needs as the *shaykh* deems fit.

* There are also a number of daily *wazeefas* that *murids* are expected to do:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ مِنْ جَمِيعِ الذُّنُوبِ وَالْإِنِّمِ

(100 times each day followed by 100 *Salawat*)

I seek forgiveness from Allah, the Possessor of Majesty and Honour, from all transgression and sin.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

(100 times on Saturdays, followed by 1 000)

يَا هُوَ يَا اللَّهُ

There is no god other than Thee. Glory to Thee. I am of the wrong doers.

O He, O Allah.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ

(100 times on Sundays, followed by 1 000)

يَا رَحْمَنُ يَا رَحِيمُ

There is no god other than Allah, the King, the Ultimate Truth, the Evident.

O Most Merciful, O Most Good.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ جَلِيلٌ يَا عَزِيزُ يَا جَلِيلُ

(100 times on Mondays, followed by 1 000)

يَا وَاحِدُ يَا أَحَدُ

There is no god other than Allah, Most Mighty, Most Exalted.

O Most Mighty, O Most Exalted.

O One, O Single.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَبَارِكْ وَسَلِّمْ

(100 times on Tuesdays, followed by 1 000)

يَا فَرْدُ يَا صَمَدُ

O Allah, send peace, blessings and greetings to Muhammad, the Unlettered Prophet.

O Most Unique, O Everlasting.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ خَالِصٌ مُخْلِصٌ

(100 times on Wednesdays, followed by 1 000)

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ

There is no god other than Allah, Most Virtuous, Most Righteous.

O Everliving, O Everlasting.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

(100 times on Thursdays, followed by 1 000)

يَا حَنَّانُ يَا مَنَّانُ

*There is no god other than Allah, the Creator of everything,
and His Decree is over all matters.*

O Most Compassionate, O Most Gracious.

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ

(100 times on Fridays, followed by 1 000)

يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

*Glory to Allah, all praise be to Allah, there is no god other than
Allah, Allah is Most Great, and there is no power nor strength
except with Allah, the Most High, the Most Powerful.*

O Possessor of Majesty and Honour.

There are also many other *adhkar* that *murids* are asked to make.

I asked Hafiz Fuzayl Soofi, a leading member of the Soofi family in Durban, what the impact on him was of having a *shaykh* in *tariqah*. He responded by quoting some verses from Hazrat Sufi Inayat Khan, a great *sufi* of the *Chishtiyyah Order*:

Inspirer of my mind,
Consoler of my heart,
Healer of my spirit.
Thy presence lifteth me
From earth to heaven.
Thy words flow as the
Sacred river.

Thy thought riseth as
A divine spring.
Thy tender feelings waken
Sympathy in my heart.
Beloved Teacher,
Thy very being is forgiveness.
The clouds of doubt and
Fear are scattered by thy piercing glance.
All ignorance vanishes in
Thy illuminating presence.
A new hope is born
In my heart by breathing
Thy peaceful atmosphere.
O inspiring guide,
Through life's puzzling ways
In thee I find abundance
Of blessing.

The Qadiriyyah Tariqah

Interview with Mawlana Ahmad Mukaddam, 21st November 2007:

Q: Can you remember exactly how your shaykh gave you *bay'ah* in the Qadiriyyah Order?

I can remember it as clearly as professor is sitting in front of me, Alhamdulillah. My shaykh, Alu Muhammad Mustapha Rida Nuri, was the son of Alu Hazrat Imam Achmad Rida (1856-1921) of Bareilly in northern India, who was the teacher of Mawlana Abdul-Aleem Siddiqi (r.a.). Mawlana Siddiqi was his student and also his khalifah. The reason I was able to meet Shaykh Alu Muhammad Mustapha Rida Nuri was because he passed away in 1991. He was the last born of his

parents and there was a big gap between the eldest and the youngest sons. When I came to Bareilly in 1969, he was already in his eighties. We had met at the institution, Darul Ulum Islam, but my shaykh was not teaching or overseeing anything in particular. He was more in seclusion. He was the grand mufti of Bareilly at the time as far as the Ahli Sunni Wal Jama'ah of the sub-continent was concerned. He was the grand mufti but he was also the spiritual leader of the Sunnis. I did not appreciate the person in those two years that I was there because it took me two years to take bay'ah.

I come from a family who were murid and accepted the whole idea of the practice of bay'ah and of having a shaykh. My father was a murid in the Shadhili Order. But being an average matriculant, I was not really concerned with spirituality. People asked how come I did not go and take bay'ah and sit by this man? It was my own ignorance and perhaps immaturity of years. So it took me two years to take bay'ah and, if I can recall clearly, we sat knees to knees. I sat as I would sit in the sitting position in the salah right in front of the shaykh, almost knees touching and I sensed some of the people who are more conscious actually touched the knees. At the time I did not know any better, but I was very close to him. My right hand I placed in his right hand and my left hand in his left hand. I think back to it now, at the time it was quite a bewildering experience – the fact that you got a good word with the shaykh and you just followed. He was also known as Shadeeh (r.a.). That means one who looks like Sayyid Abdul Qadir Jilani – that is not unknown where people in the tariqah would start looking like their shaykhs or their shaykh's shaykhs. After the Istighfar and the Shahadah, the bay'ah was given. He said: "I give your hands in the hands of Sayyid Abdul Qadir Jilani". I would have expected that I was his murid and the idea of bay'ah was that I was selling myself for guidance at his

hands but he did not say that. He was a link and he made us murid of Sayyid Abdul Qadir Jilani. Thereafter he lifted up his hands and made a du'a. That was basically the procedure.

With females, he was very strict. They had to be in complete hijab. He would keep them at a safe distance even sometimes behind a curtain. He would extend his shawl that he had or his scarf. They would put their left hand under and their right hand on top of the part of the scarf or the shawl and he would go through the same procedure. Those are the clear images I remember.

Q: With taking bay'ah, did he give you any wirts to do?

Yes, part of the bay'ah is a commitment. The first thing he starts out with is that I had to promise that I will perform my five daily salahs on its time. I will do all the commands of Allah and abstain from all the commands that Allah orders us to abstain from. I will inject in my heart to the best of my ability an extreme love for the person and personality of the Nabi (s.a.w.s.), and that I will keep away from any deviant behaviour, ideas or organizations.

The daily wirt comprises:

* Ayatul Qursi (آية الكرسي)

* Habibi Fatihah: (سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ) Subhanallah, wal-hamdulillah, wallahu akbar (Glory to Allah, all praises be to Allah, and Allah is Greatest)

* Surah Fatihah: to be recited the following way; the Bismillah to be joined with Alhamd, Bismilla hirrahma nirrahi mil hamdu lillahi rabbil alamin, and the arrahma nirahim that follows to be recited thrice.

In addition to the above, there are the five pressures of the Qadiri Silsilah, and those are the Istighfar of Fajr, Zuhr, Asr, Maghrib and Isha'. After Fajr the murid has to recite:

يَا عَزِيزُ يَا اللَّهُ

Ya Azizu Ya Allah (O Most Powerful, O Allah) 100 times, with the other waza'if.

After Zuhr:

يَا كَرِيمُ يَا اللَّهُ

Ya Karimu Ya Allah (O Most Noble, O Allah) 100 times

After Asr:

يَا جَبَّارُ يَا اللَّهُ

Ya Jabbaru Ya Allah (O Most Omnipotent, O Allah) 100 times

After Maghrib:

يَا سَتَّارُ يَا اللَّهُ

Ya Sattaru Ya Allah (O Veiled, O Allah) 100 times

After Isha:

يَا غَفَّارُ يَا اللَّهُ

Ya Gaffaru Ya Allah (O Much Forgiving, O Allah) 100 times

We have a book in which the whole silsilah, the historical spiritual tree, is in both Arabic and Urdu, and all the aspects of the bay'ah. This is a palm-size booklet in which the shaykh

signed his name. I still have mine beautifully with my shaykh's name. The other material things I have are a pair of shoes of his and a jubba. I always recite Salawat before and after use. These are some of the things that I have.

Then there are also some other specific wirts for specific reasons. But generally, the shaykh says if one can perform one's five daily salahs as best as one can, and according to the pattern of the Nabi (s.a.w.s.), and do the Qadiri wirt then one really does not need any other spiritual regime, if one can become consistent in that. He always used to say that the best of actions to Allah are those that are consistently done although they are a little.

Q: If you look back now at the fact that you had taken bay'ah and that you've come into this *tariqah*, how do you think that this has impacted on your life and your Islam?

I think there is no hesitation in answering that question but I have to be honest as well. But what does worry me and my other colleagues who are also murids, the two that I am very close with, we always take home the fact that we took bay'ah in early adulthood and I think if I'd taken bay'ah at the age forty I would probably have done better than what I did then. I don't know. I think there is an intellectual and spiritual maturity at that age, but Allah knows best. I think the shaykh also saw the capacity, so he also just gave that amount. So maybe we shouldn't be too worried. But whilst in my consciousness there is a level of disillusion clearly. I'm not happy with the necessary spiritual progression that should have been made. Clearly, and I say this honestly, and I am a bit sad on the one hand, because I know there was an opportunity and I know we did not take full advantage of that. But maybe that was the capacity at that time and I'm hoping that that time does come. I have seven brothers. I've got friends. I've got colleagues. It's

difficult to say but some of them are looking at things differently than what a murid would look, one that is in the silsilah. A person in the silsilah clearly looks at life differently. I hope that has answered some of the questions.

Q: What are the sorts of goals that you have in mind in *tariqah*?
Is that too personal?

No, not at all. I think that we travel in a particular direction and whatever the symptoms, I think the travel is to Allah. And whilst everybody knows that we come from Allah and that we are going to Him, again I think its just a psychological sight to decipher. I don't think its reality. Maybe I've not come to that reality as well and that is why I want to really walk towards Allah and there are times that my shaykh has shown me certain signs and when he was alive we were able to interact with him. Like in Ramadan, it was a most excellent period because we did not sleep in Ramadan. After Tarawih Prayers we would go right into suhur, sitting by him with Q&A and the recitation of Naat – very essential in his make-up was the recitations of praises of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). I think one of the reasons, he said, was that it softens the heart, that it makes it receptive because people who can't cry, they are softened. Naat and the recitation of the Quran, these are key things, if consistently done, that softens one towards being more sensitive and trying to bring the person and the personality of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) closer, more immediate. It is there that I don't think I am succeeding, for some or other reason, the pre-occupation with world or with life or struggling with my own spirituality and discipline of being able to stay clearly on the path. So I would like to have been able to see dreams more often. I would like to fit in more closer because some of my colleagues talk about that, in major situations and positions he comes to them. Generally I don't dream much, but I feel that

is something. So the window of my soul is a bit misted I think. But I would like to create and I would like to be more conscious of spiritual reality. Because that is the haqiqah and that then that does change minds and behaviour. I think that the fiqh, yes, it tells that this is halal, this is haram, but I think the experience of spirituality almost gives you a little window to reality - that is how the fire is. Or this is a bit misty – things right there but you're not really perceiving it. I would like to get a little window into that and maybe I would just have to review my inconsistencies.

The concept of a shaykh

In my study of the history of the Muslim community at the Cape, I have come across a number of personalities, intensely pious people, who have come down in history as *kramats* or *Awliya' Allah* (Friends of Allah). Without exception, they all belonged to *tariqah* orders and had taken *bay'ah* on the hands of *shaykhs*. Many of them made major contributions to the survival of Islam and stand out as giants in Muslim history at the Cape. I have not found in the study of this history anyone who has come down in that history as a very pious person and had not taken *bay'ah* on the hand of some shaykh. I have also not found anyone who had not taken *bay'ah* who has made the kind and level of contribution to our history that has been made by those who had taken *bay'ah*. Surely, if those who object to *tariqah* and the taking of *bay'ah* are correct in their understanding of Islam, then they should be the ones who are producing the *Awliya'* and the ones who had and are still making major contributions to Islam at the Cape in different ways. I have found nothing like that. I have posed this statement in so many mosques and have asked for names of such people but nobody has come up with the name of any such personality. This is a serious indication of the sterility of the Islam of those who oppose *tar-iqas*.

Coming back to our history, the first to arrive here in 1667 were three political exiles from Sumatra. Two of these exiles were Tuans Abdurahman Matebe Shah and Mahmud al-Qadiri whose graves are in Constantia. They belonged to the *Qadiriyyah Tariqah*. These two most probably played a major role in establishing the first very small congregational social structure with the Muslim slaves in the forests of Constantia, and, therefore, in the country. They must also have provided these slaves with religious sustenance through prayers, adhkar and teaching. They were people of *tariqah* and would not have done otherwise.

In 1694 Shaykh Yusuf, a great scholar and sufi, came here as a political exile from the East Indies. He belonged to a number of *tariqas* of which the *Khalwatiyyah* and *Naqshbandiyyah* were of the most prominent. Shaykh Yusuf is generally recognized for the role he played in establishing Islam at the Cape. According to Hendricks:

*Shaykh Yusuf who arrived at the Cape in 1694 must certainly be regarded as one of the most remarkable people ever to have reached the shores of South Africa. In depth of vision, intellect, and spirit he appears to have dwarfed both captive and captor.*²²

Shaykh Yusuf's contribution to Islam at the Cape was crucial:

*His teaching improved the quality of the Islam of the slaves and Free Blacks and, therefore, improved the general religious quality of the small group of Muslims at the Cape. "Bringing" people into Islam when the group was still very small played a major role in giving added strength to that group. Because he was in *tariqah*, Shaykh Yusuf must have stressed the spiritual aspect of Islam in his teaching, and, in the process, opened major doors to spiritual

22. Hendricks, S. 2005. *Tasawwuf (Sufism): its role and impact on the culture of Cape Islam*. Unpublished Master's dissertation, UNISA, p. 174.

achievement especially to the slaves, despite their degrading social status.

*The use of circles of *dhikr* and other congregational activities, such as the daily prayers, as simple socio-religious structures provided his students with a religious space in which their owners were not allowed to intrude. This space granted them independence and a renewed dignity as human beings, and connected them with Allah Almighty at a time when all their social connections had been stripped away by slavery and its accompanying indignities. Through this must have come hope in Allah when all personal hope had disappeared. So, even for short periods, the slaves were connected to each other in simple social structures through their combined religious activities, despite their differences in national origin.

*The personal example of Shaykh Yusuf, a great scholar and deeply pious man, who, despite his exile and his age, could continue to teach, write and lead his small group of students in celebrating the praises of Allah, must have been a major source of inspiration to the slaves and others. So whenever the opportunity arose, they would gather in his shack at Zandvliet near the Eerste River, to be guided by him. He died at the age of 73, five years after he had arrived here.

There were a number of other *Awliya'* who were here or came after the ending of the Shaykh Yusuf period. One cannot deal with all of them, and so I have chosen the names of only a few. The next one that stands out prominently is Imam Abdullah ibn Qadi Abdus Salaam, commonly called Tuan Guru. He belonged to the *Alawiyyah Tariqah* and came here as a state prisoner in 1780,²³ spending his imprisonment on Robben Island. His contributions were immense. He wrote two Qur'ans by hand at a time when there

23. Ibid. p. 249.

were no copies of the Qur'an at the Cape and wrote a major work, the Compendium, which covered large aspects of Islam - and this without any reference books at his disposal. He also established a madrassah in 1795 and a mosque in 1804 in Dorp Street, Cape Town. In my view, other than the contributions mentioned, there were two other contributions that established him further as one of our greatest forefathers:

*He established an alternative system of education for Muslims at his madrassah in order to free them from the educational system at the Cape, which was under the control of the Church. He aimed, of course, to protect the Muslim children and adults from the attempts by the Church to take them away from Islam. His madrassah taught different aspects of Islam and also secular subjects such as English, Dutch and Arithmetic.

*As a *shaykh* in the *Alawiyyah Tariqah*, he must have played a major role in the preservation and spread of the *adhkar* and *du'as* prevalent in that *tariqah*, such as the *Ratib al-Haddad* and *Ratib al-Attas*. It is no small wonder that these *ratibs* have come down in our history and are still being practised by people in the community today. In most cases these people have no connections to the *Alawiyyah Tariqah*. The *Ratib al-Haddad*, usually done on a Thursday evening, is the most well known *ratib* in our community, and has, in a sense, become part of Muslim religious culture at the Cape.

Another individual who played a major role in the history of our community is Shaykh Muhammad Salih Hendricks (d. 1945) of the Azzawiyyah Mosque. He belonged to four *tariqas*: the *Alawiyyah*, *Rifa'iyyah*, *Qadiriyyah* and *Naqshbandiyyah*.²⁴ He was perhaps one of our foremost religious scholars, and could walk quite easily in the footsteps of Shaykh Yusuf and Tuan Guru.

24. Hendricks, S. op. cit. p. 409

His contribution was three-fold:

* He launched a system of teaching at the Azzawiyyah that has never been surpassed anywhere else in the country. He taught from after *Fajr* till after *Isha'* for most of the week, covering, in the process, a large number of Islamic disciplines. This included teaching the whole of the *Ihya Ulum ad-Din* (The Revival of Religious Sciences) by Imam Ghazali. As far as my knowledge goes, I do not think that this work has been taught in the same way anywhere else in South Africa.

* He taught the *adhkar* of the *Alawiyyah Tariqah* to his students and contributed in no small measure to the spread of their continued practice in the Muslim community.

In my mind, perhaps one of his most important contributions was his call that Muslim women dress according to the teachings of Islam. At the time when he made this call at the Palm Tree Mosque in Cape Town, most Muslim women at the Cape were imitating the styles prevalent amongst women in the dominant Christian culture.

There were others after him that made lasting contributions to the survival of Islam. Mawlana Abdul Latif of the Habibiyyah College in Athlone laid the foundations of a combination of religious structures the equal of which is found nowhere else in the country. He belonged to the *Chistiyyah Tariqah*. Shaykh Muhammad Salih Abadi (Solomons) had made perhaps the greatest contribution in South Africa to the recital and memorization of the Qur'an. He stood like a giant in this field. He belonged to the *Alawiyyah Tariqah*.

One can go on naming individuals who had belonged to *tariqahs* who placed their personal stamps on our history. They were the major carriers of the flag of Islam at the Cape, sometimes in highly antagonistic environments. Through their efforts as teach-

ers and *tariqah shaykhs*, in most cases, they have been to a large degree responsible for the survival of Islam at the Cape. I have not been able to find persons in our history who were not in *tariqahs* who have made equivalent contributions.

I have deliberately given this background to this section of this work to show the positive impact that people of *tariqah* have had on our local history. In fact, a study of Muslim history throughout the world will show very similar patterns.

The question that arises is whether there are sources in Islam that advise and encourage the taking of a *shaykh* for spiritual guidance. Or should we “go it alone” in our religious practice and quest? Allah Almighty says in the Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَ كُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with those who are truthful (ix:119).

To “... be with” means to associate with, to be in the company of. And, in any case, who are the “truthful” people but those who adhere without flinching to the Divine Law? Surely they are the intensely pious, those who function knowing that they are always in the Presence of their Lord, who are always for Him and for His Messenger (s.a.w.s.). Allah Almighty says to us: “Be with these people.” Why is it that when Allah guides us to such people, to those whom He calls the *sadiqin*, we are condemned and accused of “saint worship”? Why is it when we strive to obey this Divine Instruction, others reflect their own religious shortcomings on us by calling our attachment to Divine Unity into question? What is the nature of the religious integrity of those who do these things, those who point fingers at others in order to hide their own reli-

gious dishonesty? And why is it when we say that in terms of this verse one cannot “go it alone” in Islam, we are accused of *shirk*, of polytheism?

There is another verse in the Qur'an in which we are taught how to focus:

وَ اصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ
يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ

And keep your soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face, and let not your eyes pass beyond them (xviii: 28).

There were certain historical reasons for the revelation of these words, but what do they mean to us today? Who are the people who ***call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face?*** Clearly, they are the very pious people. They cannot be others. Only pious people spend their time calling on their Lord asking for His Satisfaction. It does not matter how one argues, these words are telling us to be with and to stay with those who are seeking this Satisfaction through different forms of worship and supplications. What else can these words mean? What else does it mean to keep one's eyes on certain people? What conclusions can one draw if one combines these words with the following tradition?

It is reported from Ibn Abbas (r.a.) who said: Somebody asked. “O Messenger of Allah! Who are the best that we should sit with?” He replied, “The one who when you see him reminds you of Allah, who increases you in knowledge of the affairs of the religion, and his deeds remind you of the Hereafter” (Abu Yu'la narrated this tradition).²⁵

In an explanation of this tradition, Mustapha Muhammad Amma-

25. Al-Mundhiri, undated. *At-Targhib wat Tarhib*, vol. 1, p. 112.

rah writes:²⁶ "When one sees (such persons) their tongues are (busy) articulating remembrances of Allah, glorifying Him, praising Him and exalting Him, and that is through (their) piety, godliness and fear (of Allah). Allah (then) places deep respect (for them) in (the) heart of who sees (them) ... Allah, the Mighty, describes the pious people (in the following verse):

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا
سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those who are with him are strong against the unbelievers, (but) compassionate amongst each other. You will see them bow and prostrate seeking Grace from Allah and (His) Satisfaction. On their faces are marks (being) the traces of their prostration (xlvi: 29)."

In another narration, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) referred to those who "when you see them, they remind you of Allah" and that "they love each other in Allah" as being the *Awliya*.²⁷

Further on this matter, Abdullah ibn Umar (r.a.) related that Maymun al-Awdi (r.a.) said: "Mu'adh ibn Jabal, the messenger of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.s.), came to us in Yemen. I heard his Takbir (the words Allahu akbar, Allah is the Greatest) in the Dawn Prayer. He was a man with a loud voice. I began to love him. I did not depart from him until I buried him in Syria. Then I searched for a person who had a deep understanding of Islam amongst the people after him. So I came to Ibn Mas'ud and remained in his company until his death" (Abu Dawud).

Perhaps we should ask the important question: "Why is it that we are not with the intensely pious people whom we should love, with

26. Ibid.

27. Ibn Kathir, 1997. *Tafsirul Qur'anul Azim*. Beirut: Darul Namud, vol. 2, p. 384.

whom we should be associating and in whose company we should be remaining?" Why is it that we are so disobedient on this matter, not seeking out those who love each other in Allah, and when one sees them one is reminded of one's Lord? Why is it that we are not pleading with Allah Almighty to provide for us the company and the guidance of the intensely pious, of the Friends of Allah? What has our education done to us that we are not prepared to sit at the feet of those who are in a constant state of remembrance of their Lord, calling on Him at all times?

The critics of bay'ah

This country abounds with critics of *tariqah*, especially the practice of pledging oneself to Allah on the hand of an intensely pious person. Part of this criticism is that people in *tariqah* indulge in grave and saint worship, and that there is no need to have a *shaykh* or *murshid* since one is quite capable of plotting one's own path in Islam. Most of these critics, of course, are products of Saudi educational institutions in Medinah and Mecca or Saudi controlled or sponsored educational institutions in other countries.²⁸

The accusation that we indulge in grave worship is a major fabrication. There is no doubt that people sometimes do things contrary to the *Shari'ah* at the graves of the *Awliya* but to blame this on *tariqah* is to be deliberately dishonest. People who are in *tariqah* are always deeply concerned and conscious of their adher-

28. I would be very suspicious of an interpretation of Islam encouraged by a regime that is generally recognized as oppressive, and which took control of a country through bloodshed and large scale army and police control. There must be something seriously wrong with an interpretation that can only survive in an environment in which books are banned, there is no freedom of speech, educational institutions are heavily state-controlled and do not allow any views and understanding that are not officially permitted, the press is controlled, sermons in mosques have to follow the "official" line, and so many other matters that remind one of "apartheid" South Africa. How can one accept an interpretation of Islam that was imposed on people at the point of a gun and the threat of imprisonment and even death, and can only survive through the suppression of all other ideas and interpretations and the use of riyals to buy over institutions and scholars? It is for this reason that so many of our young men who have gone to "universities" in Saudi Arabia come back thoroughly brainwashed, unable to do research and to write, to think critically and to handle ideas, and all of them spitting out the same Wahhabi sterility. Many of them occupy positions in our mosques and madrassahs, where they spread this sterility. An Islam that liberates the human mind is reduced to an Islam that places people in an ideological straightjacket.

ence to the teachings of the Divine Law, and I have not come across a single teaching in the large range of books on different aspects of *tariqah* that advise one to do anything contrary to the *Shari'ah* at such graves. I have personally seen someone circumambulating a grave in a clockwise direction using the Nazi goosetep. I left the place immediately.

Many of our critics accuse us of a serious "innovation" when we greet the *Awliya'* prior to our leaving on *Hajj* and or *Umrah*. These very people quite happily greet Nabi Muhammad (s.a.w.s.), his Companions and the martyrs of Uhud in Medinah. How can greeting the intensely pious in Medinah not be an "innovation" but it is an "innovation" in Cape Town? Unless these people do not greet at any of the graves in Medinah.

What I wish to come to is an examination of what many of the people of *tariqah* do and what some of our critics do. Perhaps this will tell us who are trying their best to adhere to the teachings of Islam, those who have pledged to Allah or those who have not:

*Our critics say, "Our blood and our souls for Palestine." We say

إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death are for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds (vi:162).

While we focus on our Lord, and in the process appeal to Him for help for others, our critics focus on their egos. I have not come across a single individual who shouts slogans about Palestine, who has left for that country to sacrifice his "blood and soul".

* We use litanies, like *Allahu akbar*, to celebrate the praises of our Lord; some of our critics use *Allahu akbar* to celebrate the praises of a member of the politburo of the South African Communist Party. Here in Cape Town, a few years ago, a meeting called by

"our" religious leaders (many of whom are our critics) had this individual on the platform as a speaker, and 10 000 Muslims called *Allahu akbar* at the end of his speech. With the latest Big March (2006), the same person was again allowed to speak at the march. And, of course, all the Muslims cheered just as they had cheered at Vygieskraal. Allah says in the Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with those who are truthful (ix:119).

While we try our best to associate with good pious people, our critics associate with those who have no fear of Allah.

* Yes, it is true that we place intensely pious people on pedestals because Allah does that by calling them His Friends (His *Awliya'*). Some of our critics, on the other hand, place politicians on pedestals, or is it "politician worship"? We try our best to keep our eyes on those who are constantly busy with their Lord, in obedience to the following:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ

And keep your soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face, and let not your eyes pass beyond them (xviii: 28).

Some of our critics meanwhile use their precious allotted time to dance to the nonsensical political tunes of politicians. Imam Ghazali (r.a.) in one of his letters warned us to stay away from politicians.²⁹ While the people of *tariqah* are listening to him and trying

29. Abdul Qayyum, 1992. *Letters of Al-Ghazali*. Kitab Bhavani.

very hard to seek the pleasure of Allah, some of our critics seek the pleasure of members of government and political parties. These critics entertain politicians, allow them to speak in our mosques, are photographed with them, endorse their attempts to occupy official positions in government and celebrate their birthdays, amongst other matters. Of course, we are not told about the kickbacks and what our critics have to do about the "Muslim vote". Neither are we reminded that these politicians belong to a party that supports the USA "solution" to the problem of Israel in occupied Palestine, and that the same party has also sold the poor of this country down the drain. Of course, as long as the politically-correct speeches are made on occupied Palestine, and the kickbacks are worthwhile, who in fact really worries about the Palestinian people, the spreading poverty in this country and the "killing fields" in the rest of Africa!

* During *Ramadan* and at other times of the year some of the people of *tariqah* join organizations such as SANZAF, Mustadifeen, and Muslim Hands to help the poor and try to ease their hunger and poverty, while some of our critics are nowhere to be seen. On *Eidul Fitr* (and before that) when the concern of the people of *tariqah* was: "Are the poor Muslims having something to eat?" some of our critics were being entertained at an official government residence. While some of the people in *tariqah* are building small mosques in the townships, "bringing" people into Islam, helping Muslims and others in these areas in their daily lives, teaching them and making them conscious of Allah through *adhkar*, what are some of our critics doing? On some nights during *Ramadan* when some of the people in *tariqah* were in the townships breaking their fast with the poor people and performing *Tarawih* prayers with them, sometimes in shacks, what were our critics doing? Not a single one of them (and I hope that I am mistaken) is to be seen in the townships "dirtying his hands" in work-

ing with the poor people and teaching them. Of course, there are many people in the *tariqas* who are also not seen "dirtying their hands" for Islam in this way. They are also far removed from the reality of the Prophetic Model.

* Our critics say that congregational *adhkar* are an innovation. The people of *tariqah* say that they obey the following:

Anas ibn Malik (r.a.) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) said: "When you pass by the gardens of Paradise, avail yourself of them." The Companions asked: "What are the gardens of Paradise?" The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) replied: "The assemblies of dhikr" (Tirmidhi).

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (r.a.) reported that Mu'awiyah (r.a.) went to an assembly in the mosque and asked: "What makes you sit here?" They said: "We are sitting here in order to remember Allah." He said: "I adjure you by Allah (to tell me whether you are sitting here for this very purpose)." They said: "By Allah, we are sitting here for this very purpose." Thereupon, he said: "I have not demanded you to take an oath, because of any allegation against you and none of my rank in the eyes of Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) is the narrator of so few Prophetic Traditions as I have."

The fact is that Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) went out to a circle of his Companions and said: "What makes you sit (here)?" They said: "We are sitting here in order to remember Allah and to praise Him for He has guided us to the path of Islam and He has conferred favours upon us." Thereupon he adjured by Allah and asked if that only was the purpose of their sitting there. They said: "By Allah, we are not sitting here but for this very purpose." He (the Messenger) said: "I am not asking you to take an oath because of any allegation against you but for the fact

that Gabriel came to me and he informed me that Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, was talking to the angels about your magnificence” (Sahih Muslim)

Abu Hurayrah (r.a.) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) said: “Truly, Allah has angels going all over looking for people of dhikr, and when they find a group of men invoking Allah, they call to one another, ‘Come to what you have been looking for!’ and they circle around them with their wings up to the sky of this world. Then their Lord asks them, though He knows better than them, ‘What do My servants say?’ And they reply, ‘They say Subhanallah (Glory to Allah), Allahu Akbar (Allah is Greatest), and Alhamdu lillah (All praise be to Allah), and they extol Thy Glory.’ He says, ‘Have they seen Me?’ And they answer, ‘No, by Allah, they have not seen Thee.’ And He says, ‘How would it be, had they seen Me?’ And they reply, ‘If they had seen Thee, they would have worshipped Thee even more, glorified Thee more, and [said] praised Thee more.’ He asks them, ‘What do they ask of Me?’ And one answers, ‘They ask Thee for Paradise.’ He says, ‘Have they seen it?’ And they say, ‘No, by Allah, my Lord, they have not seen it.’ And He says, ‘How would it be, had they seen it?’ And they say, ‘If they had seen it, they would have been more avid for it, sought it more, and been more desirous of it.’ Then He asks them, ‘From what do they seek refuge?’ And they answer, ‘From Hell.’ He says, ‘Have they seen it?’ And they say, ‘No, by Allah, they have not seen it.’ And He says, ‘How would it be, had they seen it?’ And they say, ‘If they had seen it, they would have fled from it even more, and been more fearful of it.’ He says, ‘I charge all of you to bear witness that I have forgiven them.’ Then one of the angels says, ‘So-and-so is among them though he is not one of them but only came for something he needed.’ And Allah says, ‘They are com-

panions through whom no one who keeps their company shall meet perdition’” (Sahih Muslim).

Abdullah ibn Abbas (r.a.) reported that in the lifetime of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) it was the custom to celebrate Allah's praises aloud after the compulsory congregational prayers. He said further: “When I heard the dhikr, I knew that the compulsory prayer had ended” (Sahih Bukhari).

Perhaps one of the most despicable things, that will go down in Cape Muslim history as a very low point in our religious affairs, is the fact that a number of our critics have refused that we conduct congregational *adhkar* in “their” mosques. They have refused that we celebrate the praises of Allah Almighty with litanies supplied by Him. Allah says in the Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا

O you who believe! Celebrate the praises of Allah and do so often (33: 41).

and they retort: “Not in our mosques!” And so they want to silence the voices of those who want to call on their Lord with His Words that declare His Greatness, that glorify Him, that praise Him and that declare His Oneness. And those who want to call on Him in this way want to do it in mosques that rightfully belong to Him. “Not in our mosques,” they declare arrogantly. I sincerely hope, for their sake, that there might be some other reasons for their refusals.³⁰ They are not of the people of *tariqah*. They are the critics of such people.

30. A request for the reasons for such refusal to the shaykh at one of the Mitchell Plain mosques, was not replied to.

The Muslim community at the Cape is at present in major decline. Some of the signs of this are massive drug and alcohol abuse especially by young people, a major rise in the crime rate, rife fornication ("sex in the malls" and elsewhere by juveniles) accompanied by indiscriminate abortions, and a decline in adherence to the teachings of Islam as demonstrated, for example, by the large number of young people not fasting and praying and the small attendance in mosques for *Tarawih* Prayers during *Ramadan*. What all of this means is that the community is facing major social and religious problems. What are our critics, who claim to be in charge of affairs, doing about this? Nothing or very little! No ... I am wrong ... they are doing something. They have once more raised the issue of whether Eid al-Adha should be celebrated according to the sighting of the moon or by calculation.³¹ One does not know whether one should laugh hysterically or break down sobbing.

The difference between our critics and us is that the people of *tariqah* have pledged to Allah Almighty to be for Him, His Messenger, His Religion and His Book. This pledge has motivated us in our Islam and to work in His Cause. Those who have not pledged ... well ... their records speak for them. They claim that they do not need a *shaykh* and that they can see to their own spiritual development. Their activities and records tell a different story. It is clear that the gap between the people of *tariqah*, the adherents of Mainstream Islam, and their critics is immense. This has mainly to do with the extent of the attachment to the Divine Law as expressed in the Prophetic Model. In Mainstream Islam the Prophetic Model remains the model that is followed at all times and under all circumstances. It is the neglect of this model that has caused the religious disarray amongst the critics of *tariqah*. The people of *tariqah* have in their *shaykhs* living examples of indi-

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viduals who follow the Prophetic Model, and so their *shaykhs* also guide them by example. Our critics have no pious people to imitate, "to love" and "to be in the company of", and so they have become what they are. The people of *tariqah* try very hard to strive to be "people of Allah" through intensive religious service and working in the Cause of Islam because they know that on this path come the blessings from Allah Almighty.

Finally, perhaps what worries one, is the major religious neglect of the poor in this country. Millions of people are being denied access to the *Shahadah* because those who claim to be in charge of our affairs are playing religious and political games and are guilty of massive religious disregard of these people. What is equally tragic is the fact that large numbers of Muslims have no access to the teachings of Islam and the recital of the Qur'an. These people live in depressed areas where almost no Islamic teaching takes place. As one lady remarked to me: "We have been living like Christians." Some of the people who have taken *bay'ah* have taken upon themselves the responsibility of carrying the flag of Islam, and all that it entails, to these depressed areas, calling on Allah Almighty for help and guidance in their work. They expect nothing in return except the satisfaction of their Lord. These people of *bay'ah* are walking in the footsteps of the community's pious forefathers who established Islam in this country.

And Allah knows best.

